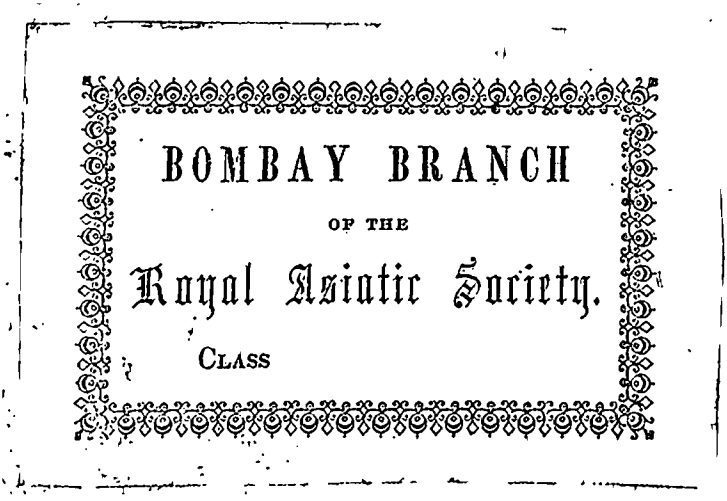

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RELIQUES

OF

ROBERT BURNS;

CONSISTING CHIEFLY OF

ORIGINAL LETTERS, POEMS,

AND

CRITICAL OBSERVATIONS

ON

SCOTTISH SONGS.

46907

COLLECTED AND PUBLISHED BY

R. H. CROMEK.

Ordain'd to fire th' adoring Sons of Earth
With every charm of wisdom and of worth;
Or, warm with Fancy's energy to glow,
And rival all but Shakspeare's name below.

Pleasures of Hope.

LONDON:

PRINTED BY J. M'CREERY,

FOR T. CADELL, AND W. DAVIES, STRAND.

1808.

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PREFACE.

On an occasion of such delicacy as the presenting to the world another volume of the writings of Robert Burns, it becomes the Editor to account for his motives in undertaking the publication, and to explain his reasons for giving it in the form in which it now appears.

Whatever unhappiness the Poet was in his lifetime doomed to experience, few persons have been so fortunate in a biographer as Burns. A strong feeling of his excellencies, a perfect discrimination of his character, and a just allowance for his errors, are the distinguishing features in the work of Dr. Currie, who

> "—With kind concern and skill has weav'd
> A silken web; and ne'er shall fade
> Its colours; gently has he laid
> The mantle o'er his sad distress,
> And GENIUS shall the texture bless."

The

The same judgment and discretion which dictated the memoirs of the poet, presided also in the selection of his writings in the edition by Dr. Currie; of which it may justly be said, that whilst no production of Burns could be withdrawn from it without diminishing its value, nothing is there inserted which can render his works unworthy of the approbation of manly taste, or inconsistent with the delicacy of female virtue.

But although no reduction can be made from the published works of the poet, it will, it is hoped, appear from the following pages, that much may be added to them, not unworthy of his genius and character. Of these pieces many had from various causes never occurred to the notice of Dr. Currie; whilst others have been given by him in a more imperfect state than that in which they will now appear.—These productions of the Scottish Bard extend from his earliest to his latest years; and may be considered as the wild-flowers of his muse, which, in the luxuriant vigour of his fancy, he scattered as he passed along. They are the result of a most diligent search, in which I have used the utmost exertions; often walking to considerable distances, and to obscure cottages in search of a single letter. Many of them have been obtained from

from the generous confidence and liberality of their possessors; some from the hands of careless indifference, insensible to their value; others were fast falling to decay, their very existence almost forgotten, though glowing with the vital warmth which is diffused through every line that the hand of the immortal bard has ever traced.—In this pursuit I have followed the steps of the poet, from the humble Cottage in Ayrshire in which he was born, to the House in which he died at Dumfries.—I have visited the farm of Mossgiel where he resided at the period of his first publication; I have traversed the scenes by the Ayr, the Lugar, and the Doon. Sacred haunts!

"—Where first grim nature's visage hoar
Struck his young eye;"

—And have finally shared in the reverential feelings of his distinguished biographer,* over the

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* The above passage has a reference to a letter from Dr. Currie to Messrs. Cadell and Davies, which has been communicated to the Editor, and of which the following is an extract.

June 13, 1804.

"On my late excursion I visited Mrs. Burns at Dum-
"fries. She continues to live in the house in which the
"poet

the hallowed spot where the ashes of the bard are deposited.*

It must not however be supposed that the present volume contains the whole, or nearly the whole of the writings of Burns, which have come under my eye, or fallen into my hands; much less

---

" poet died, and every thing about her bespoke decent " competence, and even comfort. She shewed me the " study and small library of her Husband nearly as he left " them. By every thing I hear she conducts herself " irreproachably.

" From Mrs. Burns's house my Son and I went to the " Church-yard at no great distance, to visit the grave of " the poet. As it is still uninscribed, we could not have " found it, had not a person we met with in the Church- " yard pointed it out. He told us he knew Burns well, " and that he (Burns) himself chose the spot in which he is " buried.—His grave is on the north-east corner of the " Church-yard, which it fills up; and at the side of the " grave of his two sons, Wallace and Maxwell, the first of " whom, a lad of great promise, died last year of a con- " sumption, the last immediately after his father. The " spot is well situated for a monument, for which there is " money collected, but the subscribers, I understand, can- " not agree as to a design."

* On this little pilgrimage I was accompanied by Mr. *James*

less have I thought it justifiable to reprint those exceptionable pieces, in prose and verse, which have been surreptitiously published, or erroneously attributed to him, and which in every point of view ought to have been consigned to oblivion. Notwithstanding the vigour which characterizes all his productions, perhaps there is no author whose writings are so difficult to select with a view to publication as Burns; and the very strength and exuberance by which they are marked, are in no small degree the cause of this difficulty. Whatever was the object, or the idea, of the moment, he has delineated, or expressed it, with a force and a veracity that brings it before us in all its beauty, or all its deformity. But the subjects of his pen were almost as various as nature herself; and hence it follows, that some of his compositions must be discarded, as inconsistent with that decorum which is due to the public at large. In his early years, Burns had imbibed a strong attachment

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[1] *James M'Clure*, a man who by his punctuality, his integrity, his benevolence, and the uniform uprightness of his character, confers respectability on the humble situation of a letter-carrier. He was the constant and faithful friend of the poet, and since his death has been most active and successful in his endeavours to promote the interests of the family.

ment to the unfortunate House of Stuart, which he seems to have cherished as a patriotic feeling; and as whatever he felt, he felt strongly, his prejudices occasionally burst forth in his writings; and some compositions of his yet remain, the publication of which, although in these days perfectly harmless, might render the Editor obnoxious to the letter, though not to the spirit of the law. If the affections of Burns were ardent, his animosities were scarcely less so; and hence some of his pieces display a spirit of resentment, the result of the moment, which it would be unjust to his memory, as well as to the objects of his satire, to revive. These and various other causes, on which it would be tedious to dwell, have imposed difficulties upon me from which I have endeavoured to extricate myself according to the best of my judgment. If on the one hand, with the example of the former Editor before my eyes, I have rejected whatever I conceived might in any point of view be improper for the public eye, I have on the other hand, been anxious not to deprive the author, through too fastidious an apprehension of indecorum, of those peculiar marks, and that masculine freedom of thought and expression, which so strongly characterize his works. Nor have I in this respect trusted wholly to my own judgment and feelings. Several persons, some of them most nearly

ly connected by the ties of relationship with the poet, others distinguished by their literary attainments, and their well known admiration of his works, have also been consulted. But though I have availed myself of this assistance to the utmost of my power, and "though I "love the man, and do honour his memory on "this side idolatry as much as any," yet as on many occasions I must exercise my own judgment and discretion, I know not whether the warmth of my attachment to the poet and his productions, may not have led me to publish sentiments and pieces which would have been better withheld, and even letters and poems, to which an ardent admiration of their author may have induced me to attach a fancied value and interest. I can however assure the reader, that whatever may be thought of the following collection, I have neither forgotten, nor been indifferent to the apprehensions so strongly expressed by Burns, in nearly his last moments; "that every scrap of his writing would be re-"vived against him to the injury of his future "reputation; that letters and papers written "with unguarded and improper freedom, and "which he earnestly wished to have buried in "oblivion, would be handed about by idle vanity "or malevolence, when no dread of his resent-"ment would restrain them, or prevent the cen-

"sures

" sures of shrill-tongued malice, or the insidious " sarcasms of envy, from pouring forth all their " venom to blast his fame."* On the contrary, I must be allowed to say, that if I am at all accurate in my estimate of the character and feelings of this extraordinary but eccentric genius, I have printed no one piece of his composition that he would have been ashamed to acknowledge, and that in this publication, I have been actuated only by an earnest desire of preserving such of the writings of Burns, and such only, as do honour to the poet's head, or to his heart; or that are immediately or remotely connected with the circumstances of his life, or the developement of his character.

To one whose admiration of the bard was less ardent than mine, it might have occurred that some of his pieces, containing passages of great beauty, were rendered inadmissible merely by a single indelicate sentiment, or unguarded expression, which it might be easy to alter, so as to preserve the whole. But from such a presumption as the substituting a word of my own in the place of that of the poet, (except in a very few instances of evident error) I have most religiously abstained;

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* Burns's Works—*Dr. Currie's Ed.* v. i. p. 222.

abstained; and have in such cases rather chosen to omit the passage, or even to sacrifice the piece altogether, than attempt to remove its blemishes. If indeed I could ever have entertained any doubts as to the sacred duty of fidelity to my author, the warning voice which yet seems to issue from the warm ashes of the poet himself, would effectually have deterred me. "To mangle the works of the poor bard, whose "tuneful voice is now mute for ever in the dark "and narrow house,—by Heaven, 'twould be sa-"crilege!"*

My readers will however best judge how far my exertions are intitled to their approbation. As an apology for any defects of my own that may appear in this publication, I beg to observe that I am by profession an artist, and not an author. An earnest wish to possess a scrap of the hand-writing of Burns, originally led to the discovery of most of the papers that compose this volume. In the manner of laying them before the public I honestly declare that I have done my best; and I trust I may fairly presume to hope that the man who has contributed to extend the bounds of literature by adding another genuine

* Burns's Works, vol. iv. p. 63.

genuine volume to the writings of Robert Burns, has some claim on the gratitude of his countrymen. On this occasion, I certainly feel something of that sublime and heart-swelling gratification, which he experiences, who casts another stone on the CAIRN of a great and lamented chief.

R. H. C.

Newman Street,
1*st Nov.* 1808.

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Page 26, *line* 7, *for* grinin' *read* girnin'
37, *l.* 4, *for* Scarborough, *r.* Harrowgate
136, *note, for* 1782, *r.* 1802
160, *l.* 14, *for* insiduous, *r.* insidious
211, *l.* 11, *for* near, *r.* ne'er
255, *l.* 15, *dele* been
258, *note, for* Presenter, *r.* Precentor
292, *l.* 15, *for* are, *r.* art
354, *l.* 17, *for* closes, *r.* close

LETTERS, &c.

No. I.

To Mr. JOHN RICHMOND, EDINBURGH.

Mosgiel, Feb. 17, 1786.

MY DEAR SIR,

I HAVE not time at present to upbraid you for your silence and neglect; I shall only say I received yours with great pleasure. I have enclosed you a piece of rhyming ware for your perusal. I have been very busy with the muses since I saw you, and have composed, among several others, *The Ordination*, a poem on Mr. M'Kinlay's being called to Kilmarrock; *Scotch Drink*, a poem; *The Cotter's Saturday Night*; *An Address to the Devil*, &c. I have likewise compleated my poem on the *Dogs*, but have not shewn it to the world. My chief patron now is Mr. Aiken in Ayr, who is pleased to express great approbation of my works. Be so

good as send me Fergusson, by Connel,* and I will remit you the money. I have no news to acquaint you with about Mauchline, they are just going on in the old way. I have some very important news with respect to myself, not the most agreeable, news that I am sure you cannot guess, but I shall give you the particulars another time. I am extremely happy with Smith ;† he is the only friend I have *now* in Mauchline. I can scarcely forgive your long neglect of me, and I beg you will let me hear from you regularly by Connel. If you would act your part as a FRIEND, I am sure neither *good* nor *bad* fortune should strange or alter me. Excuse haste, as I got yours but yesterday.—I am,

My dear Sir,

Yours,

ROB^{T}. BURNESS.‡

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* *Connel,* the Mauchline carrier.

† Mr. *James Smith,* then a shop-keeper in Mauchline. It was to this young man that Burns addressed one of his finest performances—" To J. S———" beginning

" *Dear S——, the sleest, paukie thief.*"

He died in the West-Indies.

‡ This is the only letter the Editor has met with in which the Poet adds the termination *ess* to his name, as his father and family had spelled it.

No. II.

To Mr. M'W——IE, Writer, Ayr.

Mosgiel, 17th April, 1786.

It is injuring *some* hearts, those hearts that *elegantly* bear the impression of the good Creator, to say to them you give them the trouble of obliging a friend; for this reason, I only tell you that I gratify my *own* feelings in requesting your friendly offices with respect to the inclosed, because I know it will gratify *yours* to assist me in it to the utmost of your power.

I have sent you four copies, as I have no less than eight dozen, which is a great deal more than I shall ever need.

Be sure to remember a poor poet militant in your prayers. He looks forward with fear and trembling to that, to him, important moment which stamps the *die* with—with—with, perhaps the eternal disgrace of,

My dear Sir,

Your humbled,

afflicted,

tormented

ROBT. BURNS.

No. III.

To Mons. JAMES SMITH, Mauchline.

Monday Morning, Mosgiel, 1786.

MY DEAR SIR,

I went to Dr. Douglas yesterday fully resolved to take the opportunity of Capt. Smith; but I found the Doctor with a Mr. and Mrs. White, both Jamaicans, and they have deranged my plans altogether. They assure him that to send me from Savannah la Mar to Port Antonio will cost my master, Charles Douglas, upwards of fifty pounds; besides running the risk of throwing myself into a pleuritic fever in consequence of hard travelling in the sun. On these accounts, he refuses sending me with Smith, but a vessel sails from Greenock the first of Sept. right for the place of my destination. The Captain of her is an intimate of Mr. Gavin Hamilton's, and as good a fellow as heart could wish: with him I am destined to go. Where I shall shelter, I know not; but I hope to weather the storm. Perish the drop of blood of mine that fears

fears them! I know their worst, and am prepared to meet it.—

I'll laugh, an' sing, an' shake my leg,
As lang's I dow.

On Thursday morning, if you can muster as much self-denial as to be out of bed about seven o'clock, I shall see you as I ride through to Cumnock. After all, Heaven bless the sex! I feel there is still happiness for me among them.—

O woman, lovely woman! Heaven designed you
To temper man! we had been brutes without you!

No. IV.

To Mr. DAVID BRICE,

Mosgiel, June 12, 1786.

DEAR BRICE,

I RECEIVED your message by G. Paterson, and as I am not very throng at present, I just write to let you know that there is such a worthless,

worthless, rhyming reprobate, as your humble servant, still in the land of the living, though I can scarcely say, in the place of hope. I have no news to tell you that will give me any pleasure to mention or you to hear.

* * * *

And now for a grand cure; the ship is on her way home that is to take me out to Jamaica; and then, farewel dear old Scotland, and farewel dear ungrateful Jean, for never, never will I see you more.

You will have heard that I am going to commence *Poet* in print; and to-morrow my works go to the press. I expect it will be a volume of about two hundred pages—it is just the last foolish action I intend to do; and then turn a wise man as *fast as possible.*

Believe me to be,

Dear BRICE,

Your friend and well-wisher.

No. V.

To GAVIN HAMILTON, Esq. MAUCHLINE.

Edinburgh, Dec. 7, 1786.

HONORED SIR,

I HAVE paid every attention to your commands, but can only say what perhaps you will have heard before this reach you, that Muirkirklands were bought by a John Gordon, W. S. but for whom I know not; Mauchlands, Haugh Miln, &c. by a Frederick Fotheringham, supposed to be for Ballochmyle Laird, and Adamhill and Shawood were bought for Oswald's folks.—This is so imperfect an account, and will be so late ere it reach you, that were it not to discharge my conscience I would not trouble you with it; but after all my diligence I could make it no sooner nor better.

For my own affairs, I am in a fair way of becoming as eminent as Thomas a Kempis or John Bunyan; and you may expect henceforth to see my birth-day inserted among the wonderful events, in the poor Robin's and Aberdeen Almanacks, along with the Black Monday, and the battle of Bothwel bridge.—My lord Glencairn

and

and the Dean of Faculty, Mr. H. Erskine, have taken me under their wing; and by all probability I shall soon be the tenth worthy, and the eighth wise man of the world. Through my lord's influence it is inserted in the records of the Caledonian hunt, that they universally, one and all, subscribe for the 2d. edition.—My subscription bills come out to-morrow, and you shall have some of them next post.—I have met in Mr. Dalrymple, of Orangefield, what Solomon emphatically calls, "A friend that sticketh closer than a brother."—The warmth with which he interests himself in my affairs is of the same enthusiastic kind which you, Mr. Aiken, and the few patrons that took notice of my earlier poetic days, shewed for the poor unlucky devil of a poet.

I always remember Mrs. Hamilton and Miss Kennedy in my poetic prayers, but *you* both in prose and verse.

May cauld ne'er catch you but * a hap,
Nor hunger but in plenty's lap!
Amen!

No.

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* "But" is frequently used for "without;" i. e. *without cloathing.* E.

No. VI.

To Dr. M'KENZIE, Mauchline.

Inclosing him the Extempore Verses on dining with Lord Daer.

Wednesday Morning.

DEAR SIR,

I never spent an afternoon among great folks with half that pleasure as when, in company with you, I had the honor of paying my devoirs to that plain, honest, worthy man, the professor.* I would be delighted to see him perform acts of kindness and friendship, though I were not the object; he does it with such a grace. I think his character, divided into ten parts, stands thus—four parts Socrates—four parts Nathaniel—and two parts Shakespeare's Brutus.

The foregoing verses were really extempore, but a little corrected since. They may entertain you a little with the help of that partiality with

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* Professor Dugald Stewart.

with which you are so good as favor the performances of

Dear Sir,

Your very humble Servant.

No. VII.

To JOHN BALLANTINE, Esq. BANKER, AYR.

Edinburgh, 13th Dec. 1786.

MY HONORED FRIEND,

I WOULD not write you till I could have it in my power to give you some account of myself and my matters, which by the bye is often no easy task.—I arrived here on Tuesday was se'nnight and have suffered ever since I came to town with a miserable head-ache and stomach complaint, but am now a good deal better.—I have found a worthy warm friend in Mr. Dalrymple, of Orangefield, who introduced me to Lord Glencairn, a man whose worth and brotherly kindness to me, I shall remember when time shall be no more.—By his interest it is passed in the Caledonian hunt, and entered in their books, that they are to take each a copy of the

the second edition, for which they are to pay one guinea.—I have been introduced to a good many of the *Noblesse*, but my avowed patrons and patronesses are, the Duchess of Gordon—The Countess of Glencairn, with my Lord, and Lady Betty*—The Dean of Faculty—Sir John Whitefoord.—I have likewise warm friends among the literati; Professors Stewart, Blair, and Mr. M'Kenzie—the Man of feeling.—An unknown hand left ten guineas for the Aryshire bard with Mr. Sibbald, which I got.—I since have discovered my generous unknown friend to be Patrick Miller, Esq. brother to the Justice Clerk; and drank a glass of claret with him by invitation at his own house yesternight. I am nearly agreed with Creech to print my book, and I suppose I will begin on Monday. I will send a subscription bill or two, next post; when I intend writing my first kind patron, Mr. Aiken. I saw his son to day and he is very well.

Dugald Stewart, and some of my learned friends, put me in the periodical paper called the Lounger,† a copy of which I here enclose you

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* Lady Betty Cunningham.

† The paper here alluded to, was written by Mr. M'Kenzie, the celebrated author of the Man of Feeling.

you—I was, sir, when I was first honored with your notice, too obscure; now I tremble lest I should be ruined by being dragged too suddenly into the glare of polite and learned observation.

I shall certainly, my ever honored patron, write you an account of my every step; and better health and more spirits may enable me to make it something better than this stupid matter of fact epistle.

I have the honor to be,

Good Sir,

Your ever grateful humble servant.

If any of my friends write me, my direction is, care of Mr. Creech, bookseller.

No. VIII.*

To Mr. WILLIAM CHALMERS,

WRITER, AYR.

Edinburgh, Dec. 27, 1786.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

I CONFESS I have sinned the sin for which there is hardly any forgiveness—ingratitude to friendship—in not writing you sooner; but of all men living, I had intended to send you an entertaining letter; and by all the plodding, stupid powers, that in nodding, conceited majesty, preside over the dull routine of business—A heavily-solemn oath this!—I am, and have been, ever since I came to Edinburgh, as unfit to write a letter of humor, as to write a commentary on the Revelation of St. John the Divine, who was banished to the Isle of Patmos, by the cruel and bloody Domitian, son to Vespasian and brother to Titus, both emperors of Rome, and who was himself an emperor, and raised the second or third persecution, I forget which, against the Christians, and after throwing the said Apostle John

* This letter is now presented entire.

John, brother to the Apostle James, commonly called James the greater, to distinguish him from another James, who was, on some account or other, known by the name of James the less, after throwing him into a caldron of boiling oil, from which he was miraculously preserved, he banished the poor son of Zebedee, to a desart island in the Archipelago, where he was gifted with the second sight, and saw as many wild beasts as I have seen since I came to Edinburgh; which, a circumstance not very uncommon in story-telling, brings me back to where I set out.

To make you some amends for what, before you reach this paragraph, you will have suffered; I enclose you two poems I have carded and spun since I past Glenbuck.

One blank in the address to Edinburgh—"Fair B——," is heavenly Miss Burnet, daughter to Lord Monboddo, at whose house I have had the honor to be more than once.

There has not been any thing nearly like her, in all the combinations of beauty, grace, and goodness, the Great Creator has formed, since Milton's Eve on the first day of her existence.

My direction is—care of Andrew Bruce, merchant, Bridge-Street.

No. IX.

To JOHN BALLANTINE, Esq.

Edinburgh, Jan. 14, 1787.

MY HONORED FRIEND,

IT gives me a secret comfort to observe in myself that I am not yet so far gone as Willie Gaw's Skate, "past redemption;"* for I have still this favorable symptom of grace, that when my conscience, as in the case of this letter, tells me I am leaving something undone that I ought to do, it teazes me eternally till I do it.

I am still "dark as was Chaos" in respect to futurity. My generous friend, Mr. Patrick Miller, has been talking with me about a lease of some farm or other in an estate called Dalswinton, which he has lately bought near Dumfries. Some

* This is one of a great number of old *saws* that Burns, when a lad, had picked up from his mother, of which the good old woman had a vast collection. This venerable and most respectable person is still living, under the sheltering roof of her son Gilbert, on his farm, near Dumfries. E.

Some life-rented embittering recollections whisper me that I will be happier any where than in my old neighbourhood, but Mr. Miller is no judge of land; and though I dare say he means to favor me, yet he may give me, in his opinion an advantageous bargain, that may ruin me. I am to take a tour by Dumfries as I return, and have promised to meet Mr. Miller on his lands some time in May.

I went to a Mason-lodge yesternight, where the most Worshipful-Grand Master Charters, and all the Grand-Lodge of Scotland visited.—The meeting was numerous and elegant; all the different Lodges about town were present, in all their pomp. The Grand Master, who presided with great solemnity and honor to himself as a gentleman and Mason, among other general toasts gave "Caledonia, and Caledonia's Bard, Brother B——," which rung through the whole assembly with multiplied honors and repeated acclamations. As I had no idea such a thing would happen, I was downright thunder-struck, and trembling in every nerve made the best return in my power. Just as I had finished, some of the grand officers said, so loud that I could hear, with a most comforting accent, "Very well indeed!" which set me something to rights again.

* * * *

I have

I have to-day corrected my 152nd page. My best good wishes to Mr. Aiken.

I am ever,

Dear Sir,

Your much indebted humble Servant.

No. X.

TO THE SAME.

WHILE here I sit, sad and solitary, by the side of a fire in a little country inn, and drying my wet clothes, in pops a poor fellow of a sodger and tells me he is going to Ayr. By heavens! say I to myself, with a tide of good spirits which the magic of that sound, Auld Toon o' Ayr, conjured up, I will send my last song to Mr. Ballantine.—Here it is—

Ye flowery banks o' bonie Doon,*
How can ye blume sae fair;
How can ye chant, ye little birds;
And I sae fu' o' care!

Thou'll

* The reader will perceive that the measure of this copy of the "Banks o' bonie Doon," differs from that which is already

Thou'll break my heart thou bonie bird
That sings upon the bough;
Thou minds me o' the happy days
When my fause luve was true.

Thou'll break my heart, thou bonie bird
That sings beside thy mate;
For sae I sat, and sae I sang,
And wist na o' my fate.

'Aft hae I rov'd by bonie Doon,
To see the wood-bine twine,
And ilka brid sang o' its love,
And sae did I o' mine.

Wi' lightsome heart I pu'd a rose
Frae aff its thorny tree,
And my fause luver staw the rose,
But left the thorn wi' me.

No.

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already published. Burns was obliged to adapt his words to a particular air, and in so doing he lost much of the simplicity and beauty which the song possesses in its present state. E.

No. XI.

TO THE SAME.

Edinburgh, Feb. 24, 1787.

MY HONORED FRIEND,

I WILL soon be with you now *in guid black prent*; in a week or ten days at farthest—I am obliged, against my own wish, to print subscribers' names, so if any of my Ayr friends have subscription bills, they must be sent in to Creech directly.—I am getting my phiz done by an eminent engraver; and if it can be ready in time, I will appear in my book looking like other *fools*, to my title page.*

I have the honor to be,

Ever your grateful, &c.

No.

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* This portrait is engraved by Mr. Beugo, an artist who well merits the epithet bestowed on him by the poet, after a picture of Mr. Nasmyth, which he painted *con amore*, and liberally presented to Burns. This picture is of the cabinet size, and is now in the possession of Mr. Alex. Cunningham, of Edinburgh. E.

No. XII.

To Mr. JAMES CANDLISH,

STUDENT IN PHYSIC, COLLEGE, GLASGOW.

Edinburgh, March 21, 1787.

MY EVER DEAR OLD ACQUAINTANCE,

I WAS equally surprised and pleased at your letter; though I dare say you will think by my delaying so long to write to you, that I am so drowned in the intoxication of good fortune as to be indifferent to old and once dear connections. The truth is, I was determined to write a good letter, full of argument, amplification, erudition, and, as Bayes says, *all that.* I thought of it, and thought of it, but for my soul I cannot: and lest you should mistake the cause of my silence, I just sit down to tell you so. Don't give yourself credit though, that the strength of your logic scares me: the truth is, I never mean to meet you on that ground at all. You have shewn me one thing, which was to be demonstrated; that strong pride of reasoning, with a little affectation of singularity, may mislead the best

best of hearts. I, likewise, since you and I were first acquainted, in the pride of despising old women's stories, ventured in "the daring path Spinosa trod;" but experience of the weakness, not the strength, of human powers, made me glad to grasp at revealed religion.

I must stop, but don't impute my brevity to a wrong cause. I am still, in the Apostle Paul's phrase, "The old man with his deeds" as when we were sporting about the lady thorn. I shall be four weeks here yet, at least; and so I shall expect to hear from you—welcome sense, welcome nonsense.

I am, with the warmest sincerity,

My dear old friend,

Yours.

No. XIII.

TO THE SAME.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

If once I were gone from this scene of hurry and dissipation, I promise myself the pleasure

sure of that correspondence being renewed which has been so long broken. At present I have time for nothing. Dissipation and business engross every moment. I am engaged in assisting an honest Scots enthusiast,* a friend of mine, who is an engraver, and has taken it into his head to publish a collection of all our songs set to music, of which the words and music are done by Scotsmen. This, you will easily guess, is an undertaking exactly to my taste. I have collected, begged, borrowed, and stolen all the songs I could meet with. Pompey's Ghost, words and music, I beg from you immediately, to go into his second number: the first is already published. I shall shew you the first number when I see you in Glasgow, which will be in a fortnight or less. Do be so kind as send me the song in a day or two: you cannot imagine how much it will oblige me.

Direct to me at Mr. W. Cruikshank's, St. James's Square, New Town, Edinburgh.

No.

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* *Johnson*, the publisher of the Scots Musical Museum.

No. XIV.

To WILLIAM CREECH, Esq. *(of Edinburgh,)* LONDON.

Selkirk, 13th May, 1787.

MY HONORED FRIEND,

THE inclosed I have just wrote, nearly extempore, in a solitary Inn in Selkirk, after a miserable wet day's riding.—I have been over most of East Lothian, Berwick, Roxburgh, and Selkirkshires; and next week I begin a tour through the north of England. Yesterday I dined with Lady Hariot, sister to my noble patron,* *Quem Deus conservet!* I would write till I would tire you as much with dull prose as I dare say by this time you are with wretched verse, but I am jaded to death; so, with a grateful farewell,

I have the honor to be,
Good Sir, yours sincerely.

Auld

* James, Earl of Glencairn.

I.

Auld chuckie *Reekie*'s* sair distrest,
Down droops her ance wee'l burnish't crest,
Nae joy her bonie buskit nest
Can yield ava,
Her darling bird that she loe's best
Willie's awa!

II.

O Willie was a witty wight,
And had o' things an unco' slight;
Auld Reekie ay he keepit tight,
And trig an' braw:
But now they'll busk her like a fright
Willie's awa!

III.

The stiffest o' them a' he bow'd,
The bauldest o' them a' he cow'd;
They durst nae mair than he allow'd,
That was a law:
We've lost a birkie weel worth gowd,
Willie's awa!

IV.

Now gawkies, tawpies, gowks and fools,
Frae colleges and boarding schools,
May sprout like simmer puddock-stools
In glen or shaw;
He wha could brush them down to mools
Willie's awa!

V. The

* Edinburgh.

V.

The breth'ren o' the Commerce-Chaumer*
May mourn their loss wi' doolfu' clamour;
He was a dictionar and grammar
Amang them a';
I fear they'll now mak mony a stammer
Willie's awa!

VI.

Nae mair we see his levee door
Philosophers and Poets pour,†
And toothy critics by the score
In bloody raw!
The adjutant o' a' the core
Willie's awa!

VII.

Now worthy G*****y's latin face,
T****r's and G*********'s modest grace;
M'K****e, S****t, such a brace
As Rome ne'er saw;
They a' maun meet some ither place,
Willie's awa!

Poor

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* The Chamber of Commerce of Edinburgh of which Mr. C. was Secretary.

† Many literary gentlemen were accustomed to meet at Mr. C—'s house at breakfast. Burns often met with them there, when he called, and hence the name of *Levee*.

VIII.

Poor Burns—e'en Scotch drink canna quicken,
He cheeps like some bewildered chicken,
Scar'd frae it's minnie and the cleckin
By hoodie-craw;
Grief's gien his heart an unco kickin',
Willie's awa!

IX.

Now ev'ry sour-mou'd grinin' blellum,
And Calvin's fock, are fit to fell him;
And self-conceited critic skellum
His quill may draw;
He wha could brawlie ward their bellum
Willie's awa!

X.

Up wimpling stately Tweed I've sped,
And Eden scenes on chrystal Jed,
And Ettrick banks now roaring red
While tempests blaw;
But every joy and pleasure's fled
Willie's awa!

XI.

May I be slander's common speech;
A text for infamy to preach;
And lastly, streekit out to bleach
In winter snaw;
When I forget thee! Willie Creech,
Tho' far awa!

XII. May

XII.

May never wicked fortune touzle him!
May never wicked men bamboozle him!
Until a pow as auld's Methusalem!
He canty claw!
Then to the blessed, New Jerusalem
Fleet wing awa!

No. XV.

To Mr. W. NICOL,
MASTER OF THE HIGH SCHOOL, EDINBURGH.

Carlisle, June 1, 1787.

KIND, HONEST-HEARTED WILLIE.

I'M sitten down here, after seven and forty miles ridin, e'en as forjesket and forniaw'd as a forfoughten cock, to gie you some notion o' my land lowper-like stravaguin sin the sorrowfu' hour that I sheuk hands and parted wi' *auld Reekie.*

My auld, ga'd gleyde o' a meere has huchy-all'd up hill and down brae, in Scotland and England, as teugh and birnie as a vera devil wi' me.* It's true, she's as poor's a sang-maker and as

* This mare was the Poet's favourite JENNY GEDDES, of whom *honourable* and most *humorous* mention is made in a letter, inserted in Dr. Currie's edition, vol. i. p. 165.

This

as hard's a kirk, and tipper-taipers when she taks the gate, first like a lady's gentlewoman in a minuwae, or a hen on a het girdle, but she's a yauld, poutherie Girran for a' that, and has a stomack like Willie Stalker's meere that wad hae disgeested tumbler-wheels, for she'll whip me aff her five stimparts o' the best aits at a down-sittin and ne'er fash her thumb. When ance her ringbanes and spavies, her crucks and cramps, are fairly soupl'd, she beets to, beets to, and ay the hindmost hour the tightest. I could wager her price to a thretty pennies that, for twa or three wooks ridin at fifty mile a day, the deil-sticket a five gallopers acqueesh Clyde and Whithorn could cast saut on her tail.

I hae

This old and faithful servant of the Poet's was named by him, after the old woman, who in her zeal against religious innovation, threw a stool at the Dean of Edinburgh's head, when he attempted in 1637, to introduce the Scottish *Liturgy*. "On Sunday, the twenty-third of July, the Dean of Edinburgh prepared to officiate in St. Giles's. The congregation continued quiet till the service began, when an old woman, impelled by sudden indignation, started up, and exclaiming aloud, 'Villain! dost thou say the Mass at my lug?' threw the stool on which she had been sitting, at the Dean's head. A wild uproar commenced that instant. The Service was interrupted. The women invaded the desk with execrations and outcries, and the Dean disengaged himself from his surplice to escape from their hands."—*Laing's Hist. of Scotland*, vol. iii. p. 122. E.

I hae dander'd owre a' the Kintra frae Dumbar to Selcraig, and hae forgather'd wi' mony a guid fallow, and monie a weelfar'd hizzie. I met wi' twa dink quines in particlar, ane o' them a sonsie, fine, fodgel lass, baith braw and bonie; the tither was a clean-shankit, straught, tight, weelfar'd winch, as blythe's a lintwhite on a flowerie thorn, and as sweet and modest's a new blawn plumrose in a hazle shaw. They were baith bred to mainers by the beuk, and onie ane o' them had as muckle smeddum and rumblgumtion as the half o' some presbytries that you and I baith ken. They play'd me sik a deevil o' a shavie that I daur say if my harigals were turn'd out, ye wad see twa nicks i' the heart o' me like the mark o' a kail-whittle in a castock.

I was gaun to write you a lang pystle, but, Gude forgie me, I gat mysel sae notouriously bitchify'd the day after kail-time that I can hardly stoiter but and ben.

My best respecks to the guidwife and a' our common friens, especiall Mr. and Mrs. Cruikshank and the honest guidman o' Jock's Lodge.

I'll be in Dumfries the morn gif the beast be to the fore, and the branks bide hale.

Gude be wi' you, Willie!

Amen!—

No.

No. XVI.

TO THE SAME.

Mauchline, June 18, 1787.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

I AM now arrived safe in my native country, after a very agreeable jaunt, and have the pleasure to find all my friends well. I breakfasted with your gray-headed, reverend friend, Mr. Smith; and was highly pleased both with the cordial welcome he gave me, and his most excellent appearance and sterling good sense.

I have been with Mr. Miller at Dalswinton, and am to meet him again in August. From my view of the lands and his reception of my bardship, my hopes in that business are rather mended; but still they are but slender.

I am quite charmed with Dumfries folks—Mr. Burnside, the clergyman, in particular, is a man whom I shall ever gratefully remember; and his wife, Gude forgie me, I had almost broke the tenth commandment on her account. Simplicity, elegance, good sense, sweetness of disposition,

good

good humor, kind hospitality, are the constituents of her manner and heart; in short—but if I say one word more about her, I shall be directly in love with her.

I never, my friend, thought mankind very capable of any thing generous; but the stateliness of the Patricians in Edinburgh, and the servility of my plebeian brethren, (who perhaps formerly eyed me askance,) since I returned home, have nearly put me out of conceit altogether with my species. I have bought a pocket Milton which I carry perpetually about with me, in order to study the sentiments—the dauntless magnanimity; the intrepid, unyielding independance, the desperate daring, and noble defiance of hardship, in that great personage, SATAN. 'Tis true, I have just now a little cash; but I am afraid the star that hitherto has shed its malignant, purpose-blasting rays full in my zenith; that noxious planet so baneful in its influences to the rhyming tribe, I much dread it is not yet beneath my horizon.—Misfortune dodges the path of human life; the poetic mind finds itself miserably deranged in, and unfit for the walks of business; add to all, that, thoughtless follies and hare-brained whims, like so many *ignes fatui*, eternally diverging from the right line of sober discretion, sparkle with step-bewitching blaze

blaze in the idly-gazing eyes of the poor heedless Bard, till, pop, "he falls like Lucifer, never to hope again." God grant this may be an unreal picture with respect to me! but should it not, I have very little dependance on mankind. I will close my letter with this tribute my heart bids me pay you—the many ties of acquaintance and friendship which I have, or think I have in life, I have felt along the lines and, d—n them! they are almost all of them of such frail contexture, that I am sure they would not stand the breath of the least adverse breeze of fortune; but from you, my ever dear sir, I look with confidence for the Apostolic love that shall wait on me "through good report and bad report"—the love which Solomon emphatically says "Is strong as death." My compliments to Mrs. Nicol, and all the circle of our common friends.

P. S. I shall be in Edinburgh about the latter end of July.

No. XVII.

To GAVIN HAMILTON, Esq.

Stirling, 28th Aug: 1787.

MY DEAR SIR,

HERE am I on my way to Inverness. I have rambled over the rich, fertile carses of Falkirk and Stirling, and am delighted with their appearance: richly waving crops of wheat, barley, &c. but no harvest at all yet, except in one or two places, an old Wife's Ridge.—Yesterday morning I rode from this town up the meandring Devon's banks to pay my respects to some Ayrshire folks at Harvieston. After breakfast, we made a party to go and see the famous Caudron-linn, a remarkable cascade in the Devon, about five miles above Harvieston; and after spending one of the most pleasant days I ever had in my life, I returned to Stirling in the evening. They are a family, Sir, though I had not had any prior tie; though they had not been the brother and sisters of a certain generous friend of mine, I would never forget them. I am told you have not seen them these several years,

so you can have very little idea of what these young folks are now. Your brother is as tall as you are, but slender rather than otherwise; and I have the satisfaction to inform you that he is getting the better of those consumptive symptoms which I suppose you know were threatening him. His make, and particularly his manner, resemble you, but he will still have a finer face. (I put in the word *still*, to please Mrs. Hamilton.) Good sense, modesty, and at the same time a just idea of that respect that man owes to man, and has a right in his turn to exact, are striking features in his character; and, what with me is the Alpha and the Omega, he has a heart might adorn the breast of a poet! Grace has a good figure and the look of health and chearfulness, but nothing else remarkable in her person. I scarcely ever saw so striking a likeness as is between her and your little Beennie; the mouth and chin particularly. She is reserved at first; but as we grew better acquainted, I was delighted with the native frankness of her manner, and the sterling sense of her observation. Of Charlotte, I cannot speak in common terms of admiration: she is not only beautiful, but lovely. Her form is elegant; her features not regular, but they have the smile of sweetness and the settled complacency of good nature in the highest degree; and her complexion, now that she has happily recovered

covered her wonted health, is equal to Miss Burnet's. After the exercise of our riding to the Falls, Charlotte was exactly Dr. Donne's mistress:

——— "Her pure and eloquent blood
"Spoke in her cheeks, and so distinctly wrought,
"That one would almost say her body thought."

Her eyes are fascinating; at once expressive of good sense, tenderness, and a noble mind.

I do not give you all this account, my good Sir, to flatter you. I mean it to reproach you. Such relations the first peer in the realm might own with pride; then why do you not keep up more correspondence with these so amiable young folks? I had a thousand questions to answer about you all: I had to describe the little ones with the minuteness of anatomy. They were highly delighted when I told them that John* was so good a boy, and so fine a

 scholar,

* This is the "*wee curlie Johnnie,*" mentioned in Burns's dedication to Gavin Hamilton, Esq. To this gentleman, and every branch of the family, the Editor is indebted for much information respecting the poet, and very gratefully acknowledges the kindness shewn to himself.

scholar, and that Willie* was going on still very pretty; but I have it in commission to tell her from them that beauty is a poor silly bauble without she be good. Miss Chalmers I had left in Edinburgh, but I had the pleasure of meeting with Mrs. Chalmers, only Lady M'Kenzie being rather a little alarmingly ill of a sore-throat somewhat marr'd our enjoyment.

I shall not be in Ayrshire for four weeks. My most respectful compliments to Mrs. Hamilton, Miss Kennedy, and Doctor M'Kenzie. I shall probably write him from some stage or other.

I am ever, Sir,

Yours most gratefully.

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* Now married to the Rev. John Tod, Minister of Mauchline.

The following fragments are all that now exist of twelve or fourteen of the finest letters that Burns ever wrote. In an evil hour, the originals were thrown into the fire by the late Mrs. Adair of Scarborough; the *Charlotte* so often mentioned in this correspondence, and the lady to whom "*The Banks of the Devon*" is addressed. E.

No. XVIII.

To Miss MARGARET CHALMERS, *(now Mrs. Hay, of Edinburgh.)*

Sept. 26, 1787.

I send Charlotte the first number of the songs; I would not wait for the second number; I hate delays in little marks of friendship, as I hate dissimulation in the language of the heart. I am determined to pay Charlotte a poetic compliment, if I could hit on some glorious old Scotch air, in number second.* You will see a small attempt on a shred of paper in the book; but though Dr. Blacklock commended it very highly, I am not just satisfied with it myself. I intend

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* Of the Scot's Musical Museum.

tend to make it description of some kind: the whining cant of love, except in real passion, and by a masterly hand, is to me as insufferable as the preaching cant of old Father Smeaton, Whig-minister at Kilmaurs. Darts, flames, cupids, loves, graces, and all that farrago, are just a Mauchline * * * * —a senseless rabble.

I got an excellent poetic epistle yesternight from the old, venerable author of Tullochgorum, John of Badenyon, &c. I suppose you know he is a clergyman. It is by far the finest poetic compliment I ever got. I will send you a copy of it.

I go on Thursday or Friday to Dumfries to wait on Mr. Miller about his farms.—Do tell that to Lady M'Kenzie, that she may give me credit for a little wisdom. "I wisdom dwell with prudence." What a blessed fire-side! How happy should I be to pass a winter evening under their venerable roof! and smoke a pipe of tobacco, or drink water-gruel with them! What solemn, lengthened, laughter-quashing gravity of phiz! What sage remarks on the good-for-nothing sons and daughters of indiscretion and folly! And what frugal lessons, as we straitened the fire-side circle, on the uses of the poker and tongs!

Miss N. is very well, and begs to be remembered

bered in the old way to you. I used all my eloquence, all the persuasive flourishes of the hand, and heart-melting modulation of periods in my power, to urge her out to Herveiston, but all in vain. My rhetoric seems quite to have lost its effect on the lovely half of mankind. I have seen the day—but that is a "tale of other years." —In my conscience I believe that my heart has been so oft on fire that it is absolutely vitrified. I look on the sex with something like the admiration with which I regard the starry sky in a frosty December night. I admire the beauty of the Creator's workmanship; I am charmed with the wild but graceful eccentricity of their motions, and—wish them good night. I mean this with respect to a certain passion *dont j'ai eu l'honneur d'etre un miserable esclave:* as for friendship, you and Charlotte have given me pleasure, permanent pleasure, "which the world cannot give, nor take away" I hope; and which will outlast the heavens and the earth.

Without date.

I HAVE been at Dumfries, and at one visit more shall be decided about a farm in that country. I am rather hopeless in it; but as my brother is an excellent farmer, and is, besides, an exceedingly

exceedingly prudent, sober man, (qualities which are only a younger brother's fortune in our family,) I am determined, if my Dumfries business fail me, to return into partnership with him, and at our leisure take another farm in the neighbourhood. I assure you I look for high compliments from you and Charlotte on this very sage instance of my unfathomable, incomprehensible wisdom. Talking of Charlotte, I must tell her that I have to the best of my power, paid her a poetic compliment, now compleated. The air is admirable: true old Highland. It was the tune of a Gælic song which an Inverness lady sung me when I was there; and I was so charmed with it that I begged her to write me a set of it from her singing; for it had never been set before. I am fixed that it shall go in Johnson's next number; so Charlotte and you need not spend your precious time in contradicting me. I won't say the poetry is first-rate; though I am convinced it is very well: and, what is not always the case with compliments to ladies, it is not only *sincere* but *just*.

(Here follows the song of "the Banks of the Devon.")

Edinburgh,

Edinburgh, Nov. 21, 1787.

I HAVE one vexatious fault to the kindly-welcome, well filled sheet which I owe to your and Charlotte's goodness—it contains too much sense, sentiment, and good-spelling. It is impossible that even you two, whom I declare to my God, I will give credit for any degree of excellence the sex are capable of attaining, it is impossible you can go on to correspond at that rate; so like those who, Shenstone says, retire because they have made a good speech, I shall after a few letters hear no more of you. I insist that you shall write whatever comes first: what you see, what you read, what you hear, what you admire, what you dislike, trifles, bagatelles, nonsense; or to fill up a corner, e'en put down a laugh at full length. Now none of your polite hints about flattery: I leave that to your lovers, if you have or shall have any; though thank heaven I have found at last two girls who can be luxuriantly happy in their own minds and with one another, without that commonly necessary appendage to female bliss, A LOVER.

Charlotte and you are just two favorite resting places for my soul in her wanderings through the

the weary, thorny wilderness of this world—God knows I am ill-fitted for the struggle: I glory in being a Poet, and I want to be thought a wise man—I would fondly be generous, and I wish to be rich. After all, I am afraid I am a lost subject. "Some folk hae a hantle o' fauts, an' I'm but a ne'er-do-weel."

Afternoon.—To close the melancholy reflections at the end of last sheet, I shall just add a piece of devotion commonly known in Carrick, by the title of the "Wabster's grace."

"Some say we're thieves, and e'en sae are we,
"Some say we lie, and e'en sae do we!
"Gude forgie us, and I hope sae will he!
——"Up and to your looms, lads."

Edinburgh, Dec. 12, 1787.

I AM here under the care of a surgeon, with a bruised limb extended on a cushion; and the tints of my mind vying with the livid horror preceding a midnight thunder-storm. A drunken coachman was the cause of the first, and incomparably

incomparably the lightest evil; misfortune, bodily constitution, hell and myself, have formed a "Quadruple Alliance" to guarantee the other. I got my fall on Saturday, and am getting slowly better.

I have taken tooth and nail to the bible, and am got through the five books of Moses, and half way in Joshua. It is really a glorious book. I sent for my book-binder to-day, and ordered him to get me an octavo bible in sheets, the best paper and print in town; and bind it with all the elegance of his craft.

I would give my best song to my worst enemy, I mean the merit of making it, to have you and Charlotte by me. You are angelic creatures, and would pour oil and wine into my wounded spirit.

I inclose you a proof copy of the "Banks of the Devon," which present with my best wishes to Charlotte. The "Ochel-hills," you shall probably have next week for yourself. None of your fine speeches!

Edinburgh,

Edinburgh, Dec. 19, 1787.

I BEGIN this letter in answer to yours of the 17th current, which is not yet cold since I read it. The atmosphere of my soul is vastly clearer than when I wrote you last. For the first time, yesterday I crossed the room on crutches. It would do your heart good to see my bardship, not on my *poetic*, but on my *oaken* stilts; throwing my best leg with an air! and with as much hilarity in my gait and countenance, as a May frog leaping across the newly harrowed ridge, enjoying the fragrance of the refreshed earth after the long-expected shower!

* * * *

I can't say I am altogether at my ease when I see any where in my path, that meagre, squalid, famine-faced spectre, poverty; attended as he always is, by iron-fisted oppression, and leering contempt; but I have sturdily withstood his buffetings many a hard-labored day already, and still my motto is—I DARE! My worst enemy is *Moimême*. I lie so miserably open to the inroads and incursions of a mischievous, light-armed,

armed, well-mounted banditti, under the banners of imagination, whim, caprice, and passion; and the heavy armed veteran regulars of wisdom, prudence and fore-thought, move so very, very slow, that I am almost in a state of perpetual warfare, and alas! frequent defeat. There are just two creatures that I would envy, a horse in his wild state traversing the forests of Asia, or an oyster on some of the desart shores of Europe. The one has not a wish without enjoyment, the other has neither wish nor fear.

Edinburgh, March 14, 1788.

I KNOW, my ever dear friend, that you will be pleased with the news when I tell you, I have at last taken a lease of a farm. Yesternight I compleated a bargain with Mr. Miller, of Dalswinton, for the farm of Ellisland, on the banks of the Nith, between five and six miles above Dumfries. I begin at Whitsunday to build a house, drive lime, &c. and heaven be my help! for it will take a strong effort to bring my mind into the routine of business. I have discharged

discharged all the army of my former pursuits, fancies and pleasures; a motley host! and have literally and strictly retained only the ideas of a few friends, which I have incorporated into a life-guard. I trust in Dr. Johnson's observation, "Where much is attempted, something is done." Firmness both in sufferance and exertion, is a character I would wish to be thought to possess; and have always despised the whining yelp of complaint, and the cowardly, feeble resolve.

* * * *

Poor Miss K. is ailing a good deal this winter, and begged me to remember her to you the first time I wrote you. Surely woman, amiable woman, is often made in vain! Too delicately formed for the rougher pursuits of ambition; too noble for the dirt of avarice, and even too gentle for the rage of pleasure: formed indeed for and highly susceptible of enjoyment and rapture; but that enjoyment, alas! almost wholly at the mercy of the caprice, malevolence, stupidity, or wickedness of an animal at all times comparatively unfeeling, and often brutal.

Mauchline, 7th April, 1788.

I AM indebted to you and Miss Nimmo for letting me know Miss Kennedy. Strange! how apt we are to indulge prejudices in our judgments of one another! Even I, who pique myself on my skill in marking characters; because I am too proud of my character as a man, to be dazzled in my judgment *for* glaring wealth; and too proud of my situation as a poor man to be biassed *against* squalid poverty; I was unacquainted with Miss K.'s very uncommon worth.

I am going on a good deal progressive in *mon grand bût*, the sober science of life. I have lately made some sacrifices for which, were I *viva voce* with you to paint the situation and recount the circumstances, you would applaud me.

No date.

Now for that wayward, unfortunate thing, myself. I have broke measures with * * * and

* * * and last week I wrote him a frosty, keen letter. He replied in terms of chastisement, and promised me upon his honor that I should have the account on Monday; but this is Tuesday, and yet I have not heard a word from him. God have mercy on me! a poor d-mned, incautious, duped, unfortunate fool! The sport, the miserable victim, of rebellious pride; hypochondriac imagination, agonizing sensibility, and bedlam passions!

"*I wish that I were dead, but I'm no like to die!*" I had lately "a hairbreadth 'scape in th' imminent deadly breach" of love too. Thank my stars I got off heart-whole, "waur fleyd than hurt."—*Interruption.*

I have this moment got a hint * * * * * * * * * * I fear I am something like—undone—but I hope for the best. Come, stubborn pride and unshrinking resolution! accompany me through this, to me, miserable world! You must not desert me! Your friendship I think I can count on, though I should date my letters from a marching regiment. Early in life, and all my life, I reckoned on a recruiting drum as my forlorn hope. Seriously though, life at present presents me with but a melancholy path: but—my limb will soon be sound, and I shall struggle on.

Edinburgh,

Edinburgh, Sunday.

TO-MORROW, my dear madam, I leave Edinburgh.

* * * *

I have altered all my plans of future life. A farm that I could live in, I could not find; and indeed, after the necessary support my brother and the rest of the family required, I could not venture on farming in that style suitable to my feelings. You will condemn me for the next step I have taken. I have entered into the excise. I stay in the west about three weeks, and then return to Edinburgh for six weeks instructions; afterwards, for I get employ instantly, I go *où il plaît a Dieu,—et mon Roi.* I have chosen this, my dear friend, after mature deliberation. The question is not at what door of fortune's palace shall we enter in; but what doors does she open to us? I was not likely to get any thing to do. I wanted *un bût*, which is a dangerous, an unhappy situation. I got this without any hanging on, or mortifying solicitation; it is immediate bread, and though poor in comparison of the last eighteen months of my existence, 'tis luxury in comparison of all my

preceding life: besides, the commissioners are some of them my acquaintances, and all of them my firm friends.

No. XIX.

To Miss M———N.

Saturday Noon, No. 2, St. James's Sqr. Newtown, Edinburgh.

HERE have I sat, my Dear Madam, in the stony attitude of perplexed study for fifteen vexatious minutes, my head askew, bending over the intended card; my fixed eye insensible to the very light of day poured around; my pendulous goose-feather, loaded with ink, hanging over the future letter; all for the important purpose of writing a complimentary card to accompany your trinket.

Compliments is such a miserable Greenland expression; lies at such a chilly polar distance from the torrid zone of my constitution, that I cannot, for the very soul of me, use it to any person

person for whom I have the twentieth part of the esteem, every one must have for you who knows you.

As I leave town in three or four days, I can give myself the pleasure of calling for you only for a minute. Tuesday evening, sometime about seven, or after, I shall wait on you, for your farewell commands.

The hinge of your box, I put into the hands of the proper Connoisseur. The broken glass, likewise, went under review; but deliberative wisdom thought it would too much endanger the whole fabric.

I am, Dear Madam,

With all sincerity of Enthusiasm,

Your very humble Servant.

No. XX.

To Mr. ROBERT AINSLIE, Edinburgh.

Edinburgh, Sunday Morning,
Nov. 23, 1787.

I beg, my dear Sir, you would not make any appointment to take us to Mr. Ainslie's to-night. On looking over my engagements, constitution, present state of my health, some little vexatious soul concerns, &c. I find I can't sup abroad to night.

I shall be in to-day till one o'clock if you have a leisure hour.

You will think it romantic when I tell you, that I find the idea of your friendship almost necessary to my existence.—You assume a proper length of face in my bitter hours of blue-devilism, and you laugh fully up to my highest wishes at my *good things*.—I don't know upon the whole, if you are one of the first fellows in God's world, but you are so to me. I tell you this just now in the conviction that some inequalities in my temper

temper and manner may perhaps sometimes make you suspect that I am not so warmly as I ought to be

Your friend.

No. XXI.

To Miss CHALMERS.

Edinburgh, Dec. 1787.

MY DEAR MADAM,

I JUST now have read yours. The poetic compliments I pay cannot be misunderstood. They are neither of them so particular as to point *you* out to the world at large; and the circle of your acquaintances will allow all I have said. Besides I have complimented you chiefly, almost solely, on your mental charms. Shall I be plain with you? I will; so look to it. Personal attractions, madam, you have much above par; wit, understanding, and worth, you possess in the first class. This is a cursed flat way of telling you these truths, but let me hear no more of your sheepish timidity. I know the world a little.

little. I know what they will say of my poems; by second sight I suppose; for I am seldom out in my conjectures; and you may believe me, my dear madam, I would not run any risk of hurting you by an ill-judged compliment. I wish to show to the world, the odds between a poet's friends and those of simple prosemen. More for your information *both* the pieces go in. One of them, "Where braving all the winter's harms," is already set—the tune is Neil Gow's Lamentation for Abercarny; the other is to be set to an old Highland air in Daniel Dow's "collection of antient Scots music;" the name is *Ha a Chaillich air mo Dheidh.* My treacherous memory has forgot every circumstance about *Les Incas*, only I think you mentioned them as being in C———'s possession. I shall ask him about it. I am afraid the song of "Somebody" will come too late—as I shall, for certain, leave town in a week for Ayrshire, and from that to Dumfries, but there my hopes are slender. I leave my direction in town, so any thing, wherever I am, will reach me.

I saw your's to——— it is not too severe, nor did he take it amiss. On the contrary, like a whipt spaniel, he talks of being with you in the Christmas days. Mr. ——— has given him the invitation, and he is determined to accept of it.

O selfishness!

O selfishness! he owns in his sober moments, that from his own volatility of inclination, the circumstances in which he is situated and his knowledge of his father's disposition,—the whole affair is chimerical—yet he *will* gratify an idle *penchant* at the enormous, cruel expence of perhaps ruining the peace of the very woman for whom he professes the generous passion of love! He is a gentleman in his mind and manners. *tant pis!*—He is a volatile school-boy: The heir of a man's fortune who well knows the value of two times two!

Perdition seize them and their fortunes, before they should make the amiable, the lovely——— the derided object of their purse-proud contempt.

I am doubly happy to hear of Mrs. ———'s recovery, because I really thought all was over with her. There are days of pleasure yet awaiting her.

"As I cam in by Glenap
"I met with an aged woman;
"She bade me chear up my heart,
"For the best o' my days was comin."

No. XXII.

To Mr. MORISON,*

WRIGHT, MAUCHLINE.

Ellisland, Jan. 22, 1788.

MY DEAR SIR,

Necessity obliges me to go into my new house, even before it be plaistered. I will inhabit the one end until the other is finished. About three weeks more, I think, will at farthest, be my time beyond which I cannot stay in this present house. If ever you wished to deserve the blessing of him that was ready to perish; if ever you were in a situation that a little kindness would have rescued you from many evils; if ever you hope to find rest in future states of untried being;—get these matters of mine ready. My servant will be out in the beginning of next week for the clock. My compliments to Mrs. Morison.

I am, after all my tribulation,

Dear Sir, yours.

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* This letter refers to chairs, and other articles of furniture which the Poet had ordered.



No. XXIII.

To Mr. JAMES SMITH,

AVON PRINTFIELD, LINLITHGOW.

Mauchline, April 28, 1788.

Beware of your Strasburgh, my good Sir! Look on this as the opening of a correspondence like the opening of a twenty-four gun battery!

There is no understanding a man properly, without knowing something of his previous ideas (that is to say, if the man has any ideas; for I know many who in the animal-muster, pass for men, that are the scanty masters of only one idea on any given subject, and by far the greatest part of your acquaintances and mine can barely boast of ideas, 1.25—1.5—1.75, or some such fractional matter) so to let you a little into the secrets of my pericranium, there is, you must know, a certain clean-limbed, handsome, bewitching young hussy of your acquaintance, to whom

whom I have lately and privately given a matrimonial title to my corpus.

"Bode a robe and wear it."

Says the wise old Scots adage! I hate to presage ill-luck; and as my girl has been *doubly* kinder to me than even the best of women usually are to their partners of our sex, in similar circumstances, I reckon on twelve times a brace of children against I celebrate my twelfth wedding day: these twenty-four will give me twenty-four gossippings, twenty-four christenings, (I mean one equal to two) and I hope by the blessing of the God of my fathers, to make them twenty-four dutiful children to their parents, twenty-four useful Members of Society, and twenty-four approven servants of their God! * * * * "Light's heartsome," quo' the wife when she was stealing sheep. You see what a lamp I have hung up to lighten your paths, when you are idle enough to explore the combinations and relations of my ideas. 'Tis now as plain as a pike-staff, why a twenty-four gun battery was a metaphor I could readily employ.

Now for business.—I intend to present Mrs. Burns with a printed shawl, an article of which I dare say you have variety: 'tis my first present to

to her since I have *irrevocably* called her mine, and I have a kind of whimsical wish to get her the said first present from an old and much valued friend of hers and mine, a trusty *Trojan*, on whose friendship I count myself possessed of a life-rent lease.

* * * *

Look on this letter as a "beginning of sorrows;" I'll write you till your eyes ache with reading nonsense.

Mrs. Burns ('tis only her private designation) begs her best compliments to you.

No. XXIV.

To Mr. ROBERT AINSLIE.

Mauchline, May 26, 1788.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

I am two kind letters in your debt, but I have been from home, and horridly busy buying and preparing for my farming business; over and

and above the plague of my Excise instructions, which this week will finish.

As I flatter my wishes that I foresee many future years correspondence between us, 'tis foolish to talk of excusing dull epistles: a dull letter may be a very kind one. I have the pleasure to tell you that I have been extremely fortunate in all my buyings and bargainings hitherto; Mrs. Burns not excepted; which title I now avow to the world. I am truly pleased with this last affair: it has indeed added to my anxieties for futurity, but it has given a stability to my mind and resolutions, unknown before; and the poor girl has the most sacred enthusiasm of attachment to me, and has not a wish but to gratify my every idea of her deportment.*

I am interrupted,

Farewell! my dear Sir.

No.

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* A passage has been omitted in a letter to Mrs. Dunlop. (8vo. Edition, Vol. II. No. LIII.) This passage places *Mrs. Burns* in so interesting a point of view that it must be preserved.

"To jealousy or infidelity I am an equal stranger: My preservative from the first, is the most thorough consciousness of her sentiments of honor, and her attachment to me; my

No. XXV.

TO THE SAME.

Ellisland, June 14, 1788.

THIS is now the third day, my dearest Sir, that I have sojourned in these regions; and during these three days you have occupied more of my thoughts than in three weeks preceding: In

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my antidote against the last, is my long and deep rooted affection for her.

In housewife matters, of aptness to learn and activity to execute she is eminently mistress: and during my absence in Nithsdale, she is regularly and constantly apprentice to my mother and sisters in their dairy and other rural business.

The Muses must not be offended when I tell them, the concerns of my wife and family will, in my mind, always take the *pas;* but I assure them their ladyships will ever come next in place.

You are right that a bachelor state would have insured me more friends; but, from a cause you will easily guess, conscious peace in the enjoyment of my own mind, and unmistrusting confidence in approaching my God, would seldom have been of the number * * * *"

In Ayrshire I have several *variations* of friendship's compass, here it points invariably to the pole.—My farm gives me a good many uncouth cares and anxieties, but I hate the language of complaint. Job, or some one of his friends, says well—" Why should a living man complain?"

I have lately been much mortified with contemplating an unlucky imperfection in the very framing and construction of my soul; namely, a blundering inaccuracy of her olfactory organs in hitting the scent of craft or design in my fellow creatures. I do not mean any compliment to my ingenuousness, or to hint that the defect is in consequence of the unsuspicious simplicity of conscious truth and honor: I take it to be, in some way or other, an imperfection in the mental sight; or, metaphor apart, some modification of dulness. In two or three small instances lately, I have been most shamefully out.

I have all along, hitherto, in the warfare of life, been bred to arms among the light-horse—the piquet-guards of fancy; a kind of Hussars and Highlanders of the *Brain;* but I am firmly resolved to *sell out* of these giddy battalions, who have no ideas of a battle but fighting the foe,

foe, or of a siege but storming the town. Cost what it will, I am determined to buy in among the grave squadrons of heavy-armed thought, or the artillery corps of plodding contrivance.

What books are you reading, or what is the subject of your thoughts, besides the great studies of your profession? You said something about Religion in your last. I don't exactly remember what it was, as the letter is in Ayrshire; but I thought it not only prettily said, but nobly thought. You will make a noble fellow if once you were married. I make no reservation of your being *well*-married: You have so much sense, and knowledge of human nature, that though you may not realize perhaps the ideas of romance, yet you will never be *ill-married.*

Were it not for the terrors of my ticklish situation respecting provision for a family of children, I am decidedly of opinion that the step I have taken is vastly for my happiness. As it is, I look to the excise scheme as a certainty of maintenance; a maintenance, luxury to what either Mrs. Burns or I were born to.

Adieu.

No. XXVI.

TO THE SAME.

Ellisland, June 30, 1788.

MY DEAR SIR,

I JUST now received your brief epistle; and to take vengeance on your laziness, I have you see, taken a long sheet of writing paper, and have begun at the top of the page, intending to scribble on to the very last corner.

I am vext at that affair of the * * * but dare not enlarge on the subject until you send me your direction, as I suppose that will be altered on your late master and friend's death. I am concerned for the old fellow's exit, only as I fear it may be to your disadvantage in any respect—for an old man's dying, except he have been a very benevolent character, or in some particular situation of life, that the welfare of the poor or the helpless depended on him, I think it an event of the most trifling moment to the world.

Man

Man is naturally a kind benevolent animal, but he is dropt into such a needy situation here in this vexatious world, and has such a whoreson, hungry, growling, multiplying pack of necessities, appetites, passions, and desires about him, ready to devour him for want of other food; that in fact he must lay aside his cares for others that he may look properly to himself.* You have been imposed upon in paying Mr. M—— for the profile of a Mr. H. I did not mention it in my letter to you, nor did I ever give Mr. M—— any such order. I have no objection to lose the money, but I will *not* have any such profile in my possession.

I desired the carrier to pay you, but as I mentioned only 15s. to him, I will rather enclose you a guinea note. I have it not indeed to spare here, as I am only a sojourner in a strange land in this place; but in a day or two I return to Mauchline, and there I have the bank-notes through the house, like salt permits.

There is a great degree of folly in talking unnecessarily of one's private affairs. I have just

* A similar thought occurs in a letter to Mr. Hill, vol. ii. lett. 95. Dr. Currie's Ed.

now been interrupted by one of my new neighbours, who has made himself absolutely contemptible in my eyes, by his silly, garrulous pruriency. I know it has been a fault of my own too; but from this moment I abjure it as I would the service of hell! Your poets, spendthrifts, and other fools of that kidney, pretend, forsooth, to crack their jokes on prudence, but 'tis a squalid vagabond glorying in his rags. Still, imprudence respecting money matters, is much more pardonable than imprudence respecting character. I have no objection to prefer prodigality to avarice, in some few instances; but I appeal to your observation, if you have not met, and often met, with the same little disingenuousness, the same hollow-hearted insincerity, and disintegritive depravity of principle, in the hackney'd victims of profusion, as in the unfeeling children of parsimony. I have every possible reverence for the much talked-of world beyond the grave, and I wish that which piety believes and virtue deserves, may be all matter of fact—But in things belonging to and terminating in this present scene of existence, man has serious and interesting business on hand. Whether a man shall shake hands with welcome in the distinguished elevation of respect, or shrink from contempt in the abject corner of insignificance; whether he shall

wanton

wanton under the tropic of plenty, at least enjoy himself in the comfortable latitudes of easy convenience, or starve in the arctic circle of dreary poverty; whether he shall rise in the manly consciousness of a self-approving mind, or sink beneath a galling load of regret and remorse—these are alternatives of the last moment.

You see how I preach. You used occasionally to sermonize too; I wish you would in charity, favor me with a sheet full in your own way. I admire the close of a letter Lord Bolingbroke writes to Dean Swift, "Adieu dear Swift! "with all thy faults I love thee entirely: make "an effort to love me with all mine!" Humble servant and all that trumpery, is now such a prostituted business, that honest friendship, in her sincere way, must have recourse to her primitive, simple,—farewel!

No. XXVII.

To Mr. GEORGE LOCKHART,

MERCHANT, GLASGOW.

Mauchline, July 18, 1788.

MY DEAR SIR,

I AM just going for Nithsdale, else I would certainly have transcribed some of my rhyming things for you. The Miss Bailies I have seen in Edinburgh. "Fair and lovely are thy works, Lord God Almighty! Who would not praise Thee for these Thy gifts in Thy goodness to the sons of men!" It needed not your fine taste to admire them. I declare, one day I had the honor of dining at Mr. Bailie's, I was almost in the predicament of the children of Israel, when they could not look on Moses's face for the glory that shone in it when he descended from Mount Sinai.*

I did

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* One of Burns's remarks when he first came to Edinburgh, was, that between the men of rustic life and the polite world he observed little difference—that in the former

I did once write a poetic address from the falls of Bruar to his Grace of Athole, when I was in the Highlands. When you return to Scotland let me know, and I will send such of my pieces as please myself best.

I return to Mauchline in about ten days.

My compliments to Mr. Purden. I am in truth, but at present in haste,

Yours sincerely.

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former, though unpolished by fashion, and unenlightened by science, he had found much observation and much intelligence,—but a refined and accomplished woman was a being almost new to him, and of which he had formed but a very inadequate idea. E.

No. XXVIII.

To Mr. BEUGO, Engraver, Edinburgh.

Ellisland, Sept. 9, 1788.

MY DEAR SIR,

THERE is not in Edinburgh above the number of the graces whose letters would have given me so much pleasure as yours of the 3d instant, which only reached me yesternight.

I am here on my farm, busy with my harvest; but for all that most pleasurable part of life called SOCIAL COMMUNICATION, I am here at the very elbow of existence. The only things that are to be found in this country in any degree of perfection, are stupidity and canting. Prose, they only know in graces, prayers, &c. and the value of these they estimate as they do their plaiding webs—by the ell! As for the muses, they have as much an idea of a rhinoceros as of a poet. For my old capricious but good-natured hussy of a muse—

By

By banks of Nith I sat and wept
When Coila I thought on,
In midst thereof I hung my harp
The willow trees upon.

I am generally about half my time in Ayrshire with my "darling Jean," and then I, at *lucid intervals*, throw my horny fist across my be-cobwebbed lyre, much in the same manner as an old wife throws her hand across the spokes of her spinning wheel.

I will send you "The Fortunate Shepherdess" as soon as I return to Ayrshire, for there I keep it with other precious treasure. I shall send it by a careful hand, as I would not for any thing it should be mislaid or lost. I do not wish to serve you from any benevolence, or other grave Christian virtue; 'tis purely a selfish gratification of my own feelings whenever I think of you.

* * *

If your better functions would give you leisure to write me I should be extremely happy; that is to say, if you neither keep nor look for a regular correspondence. I hate the idea of being *obliged* to write a letter. I sometimes write a friend twice a week, at other times once a quarter.

I am

I am exceedingly pleased with your fancy in making the author you mention place a map of Iceland instead of his portrait before his works: 'Twas a glorious idea.

Could you conveniently do me one thing—Whenever you finish any head I could like to have a proof copy of it. I might tell you a long story about your fine genius; but as what every body knows cannot have escaped you, I shall not say one syllable about it.

No. XXIX.

To Miss CHALMERS, Edinburgh.

Ellisland, near Dumfries, Sept. 16, 1788.

Where are you? and how are you? and is Lady M'Kenzie recovering her health? for I have had but one solitary letter from you. I will not think you have forgot me, Madam; and for my part—

"When thee Jerusalem I forget,
"Skill part from my right hand!"

My

"My heart is not of that rock, nor my soul careless as that sea." I do not make my progress among mankind as a bowl does among its fellows —rolling through the crowd without bearing away any mark or impression, except where they hit in hostile collision.

I am here, driven in with my harvest-folks by bad weather; and as you and your sister once did me the honor of interesting yourselves much *a l'egard de moi*, I sit down to beg the continuation of your goodness.—I can truly say that, all the exterior of life apart, I never saw two, whose esteem flattered the nobler feelings of my soul—I will not say, more, but, so much as Lady M'Kenzie and Miss Chalmers. When I think of you—hearts the best, minds the noblest, of human kind—unfortunate, even in the shades of life—when I think I have met with you, and have lived more of real life with you in eight days, than I can do with almost any body I meet with in eight years—when I think on the improbability of meeting you in this world again —I could sit down and cry, like a child!—If ever you honored me with a place in your esteem, I trust I can now plead more desert.—I am secure against that crushing grip of iron poverty, which, alas! is less or more fatal to the native worth and purity of, I fear, the noblest souls;

souls; and a late, important step in my life has kindly taken me out of the way of those ungrateful iniquities, which, however overlooked in fashionable license, or varnished in fashionable phrase, are indeed but lighter and deeper shades of VILLAINY.

Shortly after my last return to Ayrshire, I married "my Jean." This was not in consequence of the attachment of romance perhaps; but I had a long and much-loved fellow creature's happiness or misery in my determination, and I durst not trifle with so important a deposit. Nor have I any cause to repent it. If I have not got polite tattle, modish manners, and fashionable dress, I am not sickened and disgusted with the multiform curse of boarding-school affectation; and I have got the handsomest figure, the sweetest temper, the soundest constitution, and the kindest heart in the county. Mrs. Burns believes, as firmly as her creed, that I am *le plus bel esprit, et le plus honnete homme* in the universe; although she scarcely ever in her life, except the Scriptures of the Old and New Testament, and the Psalms of David in metre, spent five minutes together on either prose or verse.—I must except also from this last, a certain late publication of Scots poems, which she has perused very devoutly; and all the ballads in the country,

country, as she has (O the partial lover! you will cry) the finest "wood note wild" I ever heard.—I am the more particular in this lady's character, as I know she will henceforth have the honor of a share in your best wishes. She is still at Mauchline, as I am building my house; for this hovel that I shelter in, while occasionally here, is pervious to every blast that blows, and every shower that falls; and I am only preserved from being chilled to death, by being suffocated with smoke. I do not find my farm that pennyworth I was taught to expect, but I believe, in time, it may be a saving bargain. You will be pleased to hear that I have laid aside idle *eclat*, and bind every day after my reapers.

To save me from that horrid situation of at any time going down, in a losing bargain of a farm, to misery, I have taken my excise instructions, and have my commission in my pocket for any emergency of fortune. If I could set *all* before your view, whatever disrespect you in common with the world, have for this business, I know you would approve of my idea.

I will make no apology, dear Madam, for this egotistic detail: I know you and your sister will be interested in every circumstance of it. What signify the silly, idle gewgaws of wealth,

or

or the ideal trumpery of greatness! When fellow partakers of the same nature fear the same God, have the same benevolence of heart, the same nobleness of soul, the same detestation at every thing dishonest, and the same scorn at every thing unworthy—if they are not in the dependance of absolute beggary, in the name of common sense are they not EQUALS? And if the bias, the instinctive bias of their souls run the same way, why may they not be FRIENDS?

When I may have an opportunity of sending you this, Heaven only knows. Shenstone says, "When one is confined idle within doors by bad weather, the best antidote against *ennui* is, to read the letters of, or write to one's friends;" in that case then, if the weather continues thus, I may scrawl you half a quire.

I very lately, to wit, since harvest began, wrote a poem, not in imitation, but in the manner of Pope's Moral Epistles. It is only a short essay, just to try the strength of my Muse's pinion in that way. I will send you a copy of it, when once I have heard from you. I have likewise been laying the foundation of some pretty large Poetic works: how the superstructure will come on I leave to that great maker and marrer of projects—TIME. Johnson's collec-

tion

tion of Scots songs is going on in the third volume; and of consequence finds me a consumpt for a great deal of idle metre.—One of the most tolerable things I have done in that way, is, two stanzas that I made to an air, a musical gentleman* of my acquaintance composed for the anniversary of his wedding-day, which happens on the seventh of November. Take it as follows:

The day returns—my bosom burns,
The blissful day we twa did meet, &c.
Dr. Currie's Ed. vol. 3, p. 289.

I shall give over this letter for shame. If I should be seized with a scribbling fit, before this goes away, I shall make it another letter; and then you may allow your patience a week's respite between the two. I have not room for more than the old, kind, hearty, FAREWEL!

To make some amends, *mes cheres Mesdames*, for dragging you on to this second sheet; and to relieve a little the tiresomeness of my unstudied and uncorrectible prose, I shall transcribe you some

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* Capt. Riddel of Glenriddel.

some of my late poetic bagatelles; though I have, these eight or ten months, done very little that way. One day, in an Hermitage on the Banks of Nith, belonging to a gentleman in my neighbourhood, who is so good as give me a key at pleasure, I wrote as follows; supposing myself the sequestered, venerable inhabitant of the lonely mansion.

*Lines written in Friar's Carse Hermitage.**

Dr. Currie's Ed. Vol. 3, p. 289.

No.

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* The poetic temperament is ever predisposed to sensations of the "horrible and awful." Burns, in returning from his visits at Glenriddel to his farm at Ellisland, had to pass through a little wild wood in which stood the Hermitage. When the night was dark and dreary it was his custom generally to solicit an additional parting glass to fortify his spirits and keep up his courage. This was related by a lady a near relation of Capt. Riddel's; who had frequent opportunities of seeing this salutary practice exemplified. E.

No. XXX.

To Mrs. DUNLOP, of Dunlop,

Mauchline, 27th Sept. 1788.

I have received twins, dear madam, more than once; but scarcely ever with more pleasure than when I received yours of the 12th instant. To make myself understood; I had wrote to Mr. Graham, inclosing my poem addressed to him, and the same post which favored me with yours, brought me an answer from him. It was dated the very day he had received mine; and I am quite at a loss to say whether it was most polite or kind.

Your criticisms, my honored benefactress, are truly the work of a *friend.* They are not the blasting depredations of a canker-toothed, caterpillar critic; nor are they the fair statement of cold impartiality, balancing with unfeeling exactitude, the pro and con of an author's merits; they are the judicious observations of animated friendship, selecting the beauties of the

piece.

piece.* I have just arrived from Nithsdale, and will be here a fortnight. I was on horseback this morning by three o'clock; for between my wife and my farm is just forty-six miles. As I jogged on in the dark, I was taken with a poetic fit, as follows:

" Mrs.

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* From a letter which is printed in Dr. Currie's collection, it appears that Burns entertained no great respect for what may be stiled technical criticism. He loved the man who judged of poetical compositions from the heart—but looked with an evil eye upon those who decided by the cold decisions of the head. This is evinced by the following anecdote.

At a private breakfast, in a literary circle at Edinburgh, to which he was invited, the conversation turned on the poetical merit and pathos of Gray's Elegy, a poem of which he was enthusiastically fond. A clergyman present, remarkable for his love of paradox and for his eccentric notions on every subject, distinguished himself by an injudicious and ill-timed attack on this exquisite poem, which Burns, with a generous warmth for the reputation of Gray, manfully defended. As this gentleman's remarks were rather general than specific, Burns urged him to bring forward the passages which he thought exceptionable. He made several attempts to quote the poem, but always in a blundering inaccurate manner. Burns bore all this for a considerable time with his usual good nature and forbearance; till, at length, goaded by the fastidious criticisms and

"Mrs. F—— of C——'s lamentation for the death of her son; an uncommonly promising youth of eighteen or nineteen years of age."

Here follow the verses, entitled, "A Mother's lament for the loss of her Son."

Dr. Currie's Ed. Vol. 4, p. 388.

You will not send me your poetic rambles, but, you see, I am no niggard of mine. I am sure your impromptu's give me double pleasure; what falls from your pen, can neither be unentertaining in itself, nor indifferent to me.

The *one* fault you found, is just; but I cannot please myself in an emendation.

What a life of solicitude is the life of a parent! You interested me much in your young couple.

I would not take my folio paper for this epis-

G tle,

---

and wretched quibblings of his opponent, he roused himself, and with an eye flashing contempt and indignation, and with great vehemence of gesticulation, he thus addressed the cold critic. "Sir,—I now perceive a man may be an "excellent judge of poetry by *square and rule*, and after "all,—be a d——d blockhead!" E.

tle, and now I repent it. I am so jaded with my dirty long journey that I was afraid to drawl into the essence of dulness with any thing larger than a quarto, and so I must leave out another rhyme of this morning's manufacture.

I will pay the sapientipotent George most cheerfully, to hear from you ere I leave Ayrshire.

No. XXXI.

To Mr. JAMES JOHNSON,

ENGRAVER, EDINBURGH.

Mauchline, Nov. 15, 1788.

MY DEAR SIR,

I HAVE sent you two more songs.—If you have got any tunes, or any thing to correct, please send them by return of the carrier.

I can easily see, my dear friend, that you will very probably have four volumes. Perhaps you may not find your account *lucratively*, in this business;

siness; but you are a patriot for the music of your country; and I am certain, posterity will look on themselves as highly indebted to your public spirit. Be not in a hurry; let us go on correctly; and your name shall be immortal.

I am preparing a flaming preface for your third volume. I see every day, new musical publications advertised; but what are they? Gaudy, hunted butterflies of a day, and then vanish for ever: but your work will outlive the momentary neglects of idle fashion, and defy the teeth of time.

Have you never a fair goddess that leads you a wild-goose chase of amorous devotion? Let me know a few of her qualities, such as, whether she be rather black, or fair; plump, or thin; short, or tall; &c. and chuse your air, and I shall task my Muse to celebrate her.

No. XXXII.

To Dr. BLACKLOCK.

Mauchline, Nov. 15, 1788.

REV. AND DEAR SIR,

As I hear nothing of your motions but that you are, or were, out of town, I do not know where this may find you, or whether it will find you at all. I wrote you a long letter, dated from the land of matrimony, in June; but either it had not found you, or, what I dread more, it found you or Mrs. Blacklock in too precarious a state of health and spirits, to take notice of an idle packet.

I have done many little things for Johnson, since I had the pleasure of seeing you; and I have finished one piece, in the way of Pope's *Moral Epistles;* but from your silence, I have every thing to fear, so I have only sent you two melancholy things, which I tremble lest they should too well suit the tone of your present feelings.

In

In a fortnight I move, bag and baggage, to Nithsdale; till then, my direction is at this place; after that period, it will be at Ellisland, near Dumfries. It would extremely oblige me were it but half a line, to let me know how you are, and where you are.—Can I be indifferent to the fate of a man, to whom I owe so much? A man whom I not only esteem but venerate.*

My warmest good wishes and most respectful compliments to Mrs. Blacklock, and Miss Johnston, if she is with you.

I cannot

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* Gratefully alluding to the Doctor's introduction of him to the literary circles of Edinburgh.—"There was "perhaps, never one among all mankind," says Heron, in a spirited memoir of our Bard, inserted in the Edinburgh Magazine, "whom you might more truly have "called an *Angel upon Earth*, than Dr. Blacklock: "he was guileless and innocent as a child, yet endowed with manly sagacity and penetration; his heart "was a perpetual spring of overflowing benignity; his "feelings were all tremblingly alive to the sense of the sublime, the beautiful, the tender, the pious, the virtuous: "—Poetry was to him the dear solace of perpetual blindness; chearfulness, even to gaiety, was, notwithstanding "that irremediable misfortune, long the predominant colour of his mind: In his latter years, when the gloom "might otherwise have thickened around him, hope, faith, "devotion

I cannot conclude without telling you that I am more and more pleased with the step I took respecting "my Jean."—Two things, from my happy experience, I set down as apothegms in life. A wife's head is immaterial, compared with her heart—and—"Virtue's (for wisdom what poet pretends to it)—ways are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace.

Adieu!

* * * *

Here follow the "*The mother's lament for the loss of her son,*" and the song beginning, "*The lazy mist hangs from the brow of the hill.*"

Dr. Currie's Ed. Vol. 4, p. 290.

"devotion the most fervent and sublime, exalted his mind "to Heaven, and made him maintain his wonted chearful-"ness in the expectation of a speedy dissolution."—

In the beginning of the Winter of 1786-87, Burns came to Edinburgh: By Dr. B. he was received with the most flattering kindness; and was earnestly introduced to every person of taste and generosity among the good old man's friends. It was little Blacklock had in his power to do for a brother poet—but that little he did with a fond alacrity, and with a modest grace. E.

No. XXXIII.

To Mr. ROBERT AINSLIE.

Ellisland, Jan. 6, 1789.

Many happy returns of the season to you, my dear Sir! May you be comparatively happy up to your comparative worth among the sons of men; which wish would, I am sure, make you one of the most blest of the human race.

I do not know if passing a "Writer to the signet" be a trial of scientific merit, or a mere business of friends and interest. However it be, let me quote you my two favorite passages, which though I have repeated them ten thousand times, still they rouse my manhood and steel my resolution like inspiration.

——— On Reason build resolve,
That column of true majesty in man.

Young.

Hear,

Hear, Alfred, hero of the state,
Thy genius heaven's high will declare;
The triumph of the truly great
Is never, never to despair!
Is never to despair!

MASQUE OF ALFRED.

I grant you enter the lists of life, to struggle for bread, business, notice, and distinction, in common with hundreds.—But who are they? Men, like yourself, and of that aggregate body, your compeers, seven tenths of them come short of your advantages natural and accidental; while two of those that remain either neglect their parts, as flowers blooming in a desart, or misspend their strength, like a bull goring a bramble bush.

But to change the theme: I am still catering for Johnson's publication; and among others, I have brushed up the following old favorite song a little, with a view to your worship. I have only altered a word here and there; but if you like the humor of it, we shall think of a stanza or two to add to it.

* * * *

No. XXXIV.

To Mr. JAMES HAMILTON,

GROCER, GLASGOW.

Ellisland, May 26, 1789.

DEAR SIR,

I SEND you by John Glover, Carrier, the above account for Mr. Turnbull, as I suppose you know his address.

I would fain offer, my dear Sir, a word of sympathy with your misfortunes; but it is a tender string, and I know not how to touch it. It is easy to flourish a set of high-flown sentiments on the subject that would give great satisfaction to—a breast quite at ease; but as ONE observes, who was very seldom mistaken in the theory of life, "The heart knoweth its own "sorrows, and a stranger intermeddleth not "therewith."

Among some distressful emergencies that I have experienced in life, I ever laid this down as

as my foundation of comfort—*That he who has lived the life of an honest man, has by no means lived in vain!*

With every wish for your welfare and future success,

I am, my dear Sir,

Sincerely yours.

No. XXXV.

To WM. CREECH, Esq.

Ellisland May 30, 1789.

SIR,

I HAD intended to have troubled you with a long letter, but at present the delightful sensations of an omnipotent Toothach so engross all my inner man, as to put it out of my power even to write nonsense.—However, as in duty bound, I approach my Bookseller with an offering in my hand—a few poetic clinches and a song:—To expect any other kind of offering from the

the RHYMING TRIBE, would be to know them much less than you do. I do not pretend that there is much merit in these *morceaux*, but I have two reasons for sending them; *primo*, they are mostly ill-natured, so are in unison with my present feelings, while fifty troops of infernal spirits are driving post from ear to ear along my jaw-bones; and *secondly*, they are so short, that you cannot leave off in the middle, and so hurt my pride in the idea that you found any work of mine too heavy to get through.

I have a request to beg of you, and I not only beg of you, but conjure you—by all your wishes and by all your hopes, that the muse will spare the satiric wink in the moment of your foibles; that she will warble the song of rapture round your hymeneal couch; and that she will shed on your turf the honest tear of elegiac gratitude! grant my request as speedily as possible.—Send me by the very first fly or coach for this place, three copies of the last edition of my poems; which place to my account.

Now, may the good things of prose, and the good things of verse, come among thy hands until they be filled with the *good things of this life!* prayeth

ROB^{T}. BURNS.

No.

No. XXXVI.

To Mr. ROBERT AINSLIE.

Ellisland, June 8, 1789.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

I am perfectly ashamed of myself when I look at the date of your last. It is not that I forget the friend of my heart and the companion of my peregrinations; but I have been condemned to drudgery beyond sufferance, though not, thank God, beyond redemption. I have had a collection of poems by a lady put into my hands to prepare them for the press; which horrid task, with sowing my corn with my own hand, a parcel of masons, wrights, plaisterers, &c. to attend to, roaming on business through Ayrshire—all this was against me, and the very first dreadful article was of itself too much for me.

13th. I have not had a moment to spare from incessant toil since the 8th. Life, my dear Sir, is a serious matter. You know by experience that a man's individual self is a good deal, but believe me,

me,' a wife and family of children, whenever you have the honor to be a husband and a father, will shew you that your present most anxious hours of solicitude are spent on trifles. The welfare of those who are very dear to us, whose only support, hope and stay we are—this, to a generous mind, is another sort of more important object of care than any concerns whatever which center merely in the individual. On the other hand, let no young, unmarried, rakehelly dog among you, make a song of his pretended liberty and freedom from care. If the relations we stand in to king, country, kindred, and friends, be any thing but the visionary fancies of dreaming metaphysicians; if religion, virtue, magnanimity, generosity, humanity and justice be aught but empty sounds; then the man who may be said to live only for others, for the beloved, honorable female whose tender faithful embrace endears life, and for the helpless little innocents who are to be the men and women, the worshippers of his God, the subjects of his king, and the support, nay the very vital existence of his COUNTRY, in the ensuing age;—compare such a man with any fellow whatever, who, whether he bustle and push in business among laborers, clerks, statesmen; or whether he roar and rant, and drink and sing in taverns—a fellow over whose grave no one will breathe a single

heigh-ho,

heigh-ho, except from the cobweb-tie of what is called good fellowship—who has no view nor aim but what terminates in himself—if there be any grovelling earthborn wretch of our species, a renegado to common sense, who would fain believe that the noble creature, man, is no better than a sort of fungus, generated out of nothing, nobody knows how, and soon dissipating in nothing, nobody knows where; such a stupid beast, such a crawling reptile might balance the foregoing unexaggerated comparison, but no one else would have the patience.

Forgive me, my dear Sir, for this long silence. *To make you amends*, I shall send you soon, and more encouraging still, without any postage, one or two rhymes of my later manufacture.

No. XXXVII.

To Capt. RIDDEL, Carse.

Ellisland, Oct. 16, 1789.

SIR,

Big with the idea of this important day* at Friars Carse, I have watched the elements and skies in the full persuasion that they would announce it to the astonished world by some phenomena of terrific portent.—Yesternight until a very late hour did I wait with anxious horror, for the appearance of some Comet firing half the sky; or aerial armies of sanguinary Scandinavians, darting athwart the startled heavens rapid as the ragged lightning, and horrid as those convulsions of nature that bury nations.

The elements, however, seem to take the matter very quietly: they did not even usher in this morning with triple suns and a shower of blood, symbolical

* The day on which "the Whistle" was contended for.

symbolical of the three potent heroes, and the mighty claret-shed of the day.—For me, as Thomson in his Winter says of the storm—I shall "Hear astonished, and astonished sing"

The whistle and the man; I sing
The man that won the whistle, &c.

"Here are we met, three merry boys,
"Three merry boys I trow are we;
"And mony a night we've merry been,
"And mony mae we hope to be.

"Wha first shall rise to gang awa,
"A cuckold coward loun is he:
"Wha *last** beside his chair shall fa'
"He is the king amang us three."

To leave the heights of Parnassus and come to the humble vale of prose.—I have some misgivings that I take too much upon me, when I request you to get your guest, Sir Robert Lowrie, to frank the two inclosed covers for me, the one of them, to Sir William Cunningham, of Robertland, Bart. at Auchenskeith, Kilmarnock,

—the

* In former Editions of these verses, the word *first* has been printed in this place instead of the word *last*.

E.

—the other, to Mr. Allan Masterton, Writing-Master, Edinburgh. The first has a kindred claim on Sir Robert, as being a brother Baronet, and likewise a keen Foxite; the other is one of the worthiest men in the world, and a man of real genius; so, allow me to say, he has a fraternal claim on you. I want them franked for to-morrow as I cannot get them to the post to-night. —I shall send a servant again for them in the evening. Wishing that your head may be crown-with laurels to-night, and free from aches to-morrow,

I have the honor to be,

Sir,

Your deeply indebted humble Servant.

No. XXXVIII.

TO THE SAME.

SIR,

I WISH from my inmost soul it were in my power to give you a more substantial gratification and return for all your goodness to the poet, than transcribing a few of his idle rhymes. —However, "an old song," though to a proverb an instance of insignificance, is generally the only coin a poet has to pay with.

If my poems which I have transcribed, and mean still to transcribe into your book, were equal to the grateful respect and high esteem I bear for the gentleman to whom I present them, they would be the finest poems in the language. —As they are, they will at least be a testimony with what sincerity I have the honor to be,

Sir,

Your devoted humble Servant.

No. XXXIX.

To Mr. ROBERT AINSLIE.

Ellisland, Nov. 1, 1789.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

I had written you long ere now, could I have guessed where to find you, for I am sure you have more good sense than to waste the precious days of vacation time in the dirt of business and Edinburgh.—Wherever you are, God bless you, and lead you not into temptation, but deliver you from evil!

I do not know if I have informed you that I am now appointed to an excise division, in the middle of which my house and farm lie. In this I was extremely lucky. Without ever having been an expectant, as they call their journeymen excisemen, I was directly planted down to all intents and purposes an officer of excise; there to flourish and bring forth fruits—worthy of repentance.

I know not how the word exciseman, or still

more opprobrious, gauger, will sound in your ears. I too have seen the day when my auditory nerves would have felt very delicately on this subject; but a wife and children are things which have a wonderful power in blunting these kind of sensations. Fifty pounds a year for life, and a provision for widows and orphans, you will allow is no bad settlement for a *poet*. For the ignominy of the profession, I have the encouragement which I once heard a recruiting serjeant give to a numerous, if not a respectable audience, in the streets of Kilmarnock.—"Gentle-"men, for your further and better encourage-"ment, I can assure you that our regiment is the "most blackguard corps under the crown, and "consequently with us an honest fellow has the "surest chance for preferment."

You need not doubt that I find several very unpleasant and disagreeable circumstances in my business; but I am tired with and disgusted at the language of complaint against the evils of life. Human existence in the most favorable situations does not abound with pleasures, and has its inconveniences and ills; capricious foolish man mistakes these inconveniences and ills as if they were the peculiar property of his particular situation; and hence that eternal fickleness, that love of change, which has ruined, and daily

daily does ruin many a fine fellow, as well as many a blockhead; and is almost, without exception, a constant source of disappointment and misery.

I long to hear from you how you go on—not so much in business as in life. Are you pretty well satisfied with your own exertions, and tolerably at ease in your internal reflections? 'Tis much to be a great character as a lawyer, but beyond comparison more to be a great character as a man. That you may be both the one and the other is the earnest wish, and that you *will* be both is the firm persuasion of,

My dear Sir, &c.

No. XL.

To Mr. PETER HILL, Bookseller, Edinburgh.

Ellisland, Feb. 2, 1790.

No! I will not say one word about apologies or excuses for not writing—I am a poor, rascally gauger, condemned to gallop at least

least 200 miles every week to inspect dirty ponds and yeasty barrels, and where can I find time to write to, or importance to interest any body? The upbraidings of my conscience, nay the upbraidings of my wife, have persecuted me on your account these two or three months past.—I wish to God I was a great man, that my correspondence might throw light upon you, to let the world see what you really are; and then I would make your fortune, without putting my hand in my pocket for you, which, like all other great men, I suppose I would avoid as much as possible. What are you doing, and how are you doing? Have you lately seen any of my few friends? What is become of the BOROUGH REFORM, or how is the fate of my poor namesake Mademoiselle Burns decided? O man! but for thee and thy selfish appetites, and dishonest artifices, that beauteous form, and that once innocent and still ingenuous mind might have shone conspicuous and lovely in the faithful wife, and the affectionate mother; and shall the unfortunate sacrifice to thy pleasures have no claim on thy humanity!

I saw lately in a Review, some extracts from a new poem, called The Village Curate; send it me. I want likewise a cheap copy of The World. Mr. Armstrong, the young poet, who

does

does me the honor to mention me so kindly in his works, please give him my best thanks for the copy of his book—I shall write him, my first leisure hour. I like his poetry much, but I think his style in prose quite astonishing.

* * * *

Your book came safe, and I am going to trouble you with farther commissions. I call it troubling you—because I want only, BOOKS; the cheapest way, the best; so you may have to hunt for them in the evening auctions. I want Smollett's Works, for the sake of his incomparable humor. I have already Roderick Random, and Humphrey Clinker.—Peregrine Pickle, Launcelot Greaves, and Frederick, Count Fathom, I still want; but as I said, the veriest ordinary copies will serve me. I am nice only in the appearance of my poets. I forget the price of Cowper's Poems, but, I believe, I must have them. I saw the other day, proposals for a publication, entitled, "Banks's new and complete Christian's Family Bible," printed for C. Cooke, Paternoster-row, London.—He promises at least, to give in the work, I think it is three hundred and odd engravings, to which he has put the names of the first artists in London.*—

You

* Perhaps no set of men more effectually avail themselves of the easy credulity of the public, than a certain descriptio

You will know the character of the performance, as some numbers of it are published; and if it is really what it pretends to be, set me down as a subscriber, and send me the published numbers.

Let me hear from you, your first leisure minute, and trust me, you shall in future have no reason to complain of my silence. The dazzling perplexity of novelty will dissipate and leave me

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description of Paternoster-row booksellers. Three hundred and odd engravings!—and by the *first artists* in London, too! No wonder that Burns was dazzled by the splendour of the promise. It is no unusual thing for this class of impostors to *illustrate* the *Holy Scriptures* by plates originally engraved for the *History of England*, and I have actually seen subjects designed by our celebrated artist Stothard, from *Clarissa Harlowe* and the *Novelist's Magazine*, converted, with incredible dexterity, by these Bookselling-Breslaws, into *Scriptural embellishments!* One of these venders of 'Family Bibles' lately called on me, to consult me professionally, about a folio engraving he brought with him.—It represented MONS. BUFFON, seated, contemplating various groups of animals that surrounded him: He merely wished, he said, to be informed, whether by *uncloathing* the Naturalist, and giving him a rather more *resolute* look, the plate could not, at a trifling expense, be made to pass for "DANIEL IN THE LIONS' DEN!" E.

me to pursue my course in the quiet path of methodical routine.

No. XLI.

To Mr. W. NICOL.

Ellisland, Feb. 9, 1790.

MY DEAR SIR,

THAT d–mned mare of yours is dead. I would freely have given her price to have saved her: she has vexed me beyond description. Indebted as I was to your goodness beyond what I can ever repay, I eagerly grasped at your offer to have the mare with me. That I might at least shew my readiness in wishing to be grateful, I took every care of her in my power. She was never crossed for riding above half a score of times by me or in my keeping. I drew her in the plough, one of three, for one poor week. I refused fifty-five shillings for her, which was the highest bode I could squeeze for her. I fed her up and had her in fine order for Dumfries fair; when four or five days before the fair, she was seized with an unaccountable disorder in the si-

news,

news, or somewhere in the bones of the neck; with a weakness or total want of power in her fillets, and in short the whole vertebræ of her spine seemed to be diseased and unhinged, and in eight and forty hours, in spite of the two best farriers in the country, she died and be d–mned to her! The farriers said that she had been quite strained in the fillets beyond cure before you had bought her, and that the poor devil, though she might keep a little flesh, had been jaded and quite worn out with fatigue and oppression. While she was with me, she was under my own eye, and I assure you, my much valued friend, every thing was done for her that could be done; and the accident has vexed me to the heart. In fact I could not pluck up spirits to write you, on account of the unfortunate business.

There is little new in this country. Our theatrical company, of which you must have heard, leave us in a week. Their merit and character are indeed very great, both on the stage and in private life; not a worthless creature among them; and their encouragement has been accordingly. Their usual run is from eighteen to twenty-five pounds a night; seldom less than the one, and the house will hold no more than the other. There have been repeated instances of

sending

sending away six, and eight, and ten pounds in a night for want of room. A new theatre is to be built by subscription; the first stone is to be laid on Friday first to come.* Three hundred guineas have been raised by thirty subscribers, and thirty more might have been got if wanted. The manager, Mr. Sutherland, was introduced to me by a friend from Ayr; and a worthier or cleverer fellow I have rarely met with. Some of our clergy have slipt in by stealth now and then; but they have got up a farce of their own. You must have heard how the Rev. Mr. Lawson of Kirkmahoe, seconded by the Rev. Mr. Kirkpatrick of Dunscore, and the rest of that faction, have accused in formal process, the unfortunate and Rev. Mr. Heron of Kirkgunzeon, that in ordaining Mr. Nelson to the cure of souls in Kirkbean, he, the said Heron, feloniously and treasonably bound the said Nelson to the confession of faith, *so far as it was agreeable to reason and the word of God!*

Mrs. B. begs to be remembered most gratefully to you. Little Bobby and Frank are charmingly well and healthy. I am jaded to death with fatigue. For these two or three months, on an average, I have not ridden less than

* *On Friday first to come*—a Scotticism.

than two hundred miles per week. I have done little in the poetic way. I have given Mr. Sutherland two Prologues; one of which was delivered last week. I have likewise strung four or five barbarous stanzas, to the tune of Chevy Chase, by way of Elegy on your poor unfortunate mare, beginning (the name she got here was Peg Nicholson)

Peg Nicholson was a good bay mare,
As ever trode on airn;
But now she's floating down the Nith,
And past the Mouth o'Cairn.

Peg Nicholson was a good bay mare,
And rode thro' thick and thin;
But now she's floating down the Nith,
And wanting even the skin.

Peg Nicholson was a good bay mare,
And ance she bore a priest;
But now she's floating down the Nith,
For Solway fish a feast.

Peg Nicholson was a good bay mare,
And the priest he rode her sair:
And much oppressed and bruised she was;
—As priest-rid cattle are, &c. &c.

My

My best compliments to Mrs. Nicol, and little Neddy, and all the family. I hope Ned is a good scholar, and will come out to gather nuts and apples with me next harvest.

No. XLII.

To Mr. MURDOCH,

TEACHER OF FRENCH, LONDON.

Ellisland, July 16, 1790.

MY DEAR SIR,

I RECEIVED a letter from you a long time ago, but unfortunately as it was in the time of my peregrinations and journeyings through Scotland, I mislaid or lost it, and by consequence your direction along with it. Luckily my good star brought me acquainted with Mr. Kennedy, who, I understand, is an acquaintance of yours: and by his means and mediation I hope to replace that link which my unfortunate negligence had so unluckily broke in the chain of our correspondence. I was the more vexed at the vile accident, as my brother William, a journeyman saddler, has been for some time in London; and wished

wished above all things for your direction, that he might have paid his respects to his FATHER'S FRIEND.

His last address he sent me was, "Wm. Burns, at Mr. Barber's, Saddler, No. 181, Strand." I write him by Mr. Kennedy, but neglected to ask him for your address; so, if you find a spare half minute, please let my brother know by a card where and when he will find you, and the poor fellow will joyfully wait on you, as one of the few surviving friends of the man whose name, and Christian name too, he has the honor to bear.

The next letter I write you shall be a long one. I have much to tell you of "hair-breadth 'scapes in th' imminent deadly breach," with all the eventful history of a life, the early years of which owed so much to your kind tutorage; but this at an hour of leisure. My kindest compliments to Mrs. Murdoch and family.

I am ever, my dear Sir,

Your obliged friend.*

No.

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* This letter was communicated to the Editor by a gentleman to whose liberal advice and information he is much indebted,

No. XLIII.

To CRAUFORD TAIT, Esq. EDINBURGH.

Ellisland, Oct. 15, 1790.

DEAR SIR,

ALLOW me to introduce to your acquaintance the bearer, Mr. Wm. Duncan, a friend of mine, whom I have long known and long

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indebted, Mr. John Murdoch, the tutor of the poet; accompanied by the following interesting note.

London, Hart-street, Bloomsbury,
28th. Dec. 1807.

DEAR SIR,

THE following letter, which I lately found among my papers, I copy for your perusal, partly because it is Burns's, partly because it makes honourable mention of my rational Christian friend, his father; and likewise because it is rather flattering to myself. I glory in no one thing so much as an intimacy with good men:—the friendship of others reflects no honour. When I recollect the pleasure,

long loved. His father, whose only son he is, has a decent little property in Ayrshire, and has bred the young man to the law, in which department

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pleasure (and I hope benefit,) I received from the conversation of WILLIAM BURNS, especially when on the Lord's day we walked together for about two miles, to the house of prayer, there publicly to adore and praise the Giver of all good, I entertain an ardent hope, that together we shall "renew the glorious theme in distant worlds," with powers more adequate to the mighty subject, THE EXUBERANT BENEFICENCE OF THE GREAT CREATOR. But to the letter:—[*Here follows the letter relative to young Wm. Burns.*]

I promised myself a deal of happiness in the conversation of my dear young friend; but my promises of this nature generally prove fallacious. Two visits were the utmost that I received. At one of them, however, he repeated a lesson which I had given him about twenty years before, when he was a mere child, concerning the pity and tenderness due to animals. To that lesson, (which it seems was brought to the level of his capacity,) he declared himself indebted for almost all the philanthropy he possessed.

Let not parents and teachers imagine that it is needless to talk seriously to children. They are sooner fit to be reasoned with than is generally thought. Strong and indelible impressions are to be made before the mind be agitated

ment he comes up an adventurer to your good town. I shall give you my friend's character in two words: as to his head, he has talents enough, and more than enough for common life; as to his heart, when nature had kneaded the kindly clay that composes it, she said, "I can no more."

You, my good sir, were born under kinder stars; but your fraternal sympathy, I well know, can enter into the feelings of the young man, who goes into life with the laudable ambition to *do* something, and to *be* something among his fellow-creatures; but whom the consciousness of friendless obscurity presses to the earth, and wounds to the soul!

Even the fairest of his virtues are against him. That independent spirit, and that ingenuous modesty,

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agitated and ruffled by the numerous train of distracting cares and unruly passions, whereby it is frequently rendered almost unsusceptible of the principles and precepts of rational religion and sound morality.

But I find myself digressing again. Poor William! then in the bloom and vigour of youth, caught a putrid fever, and, in a few days, as real chief mourner, I followed his remains to the land of forgetfulness.

JOHN MURDOCH.

desty, qualities inseparable from a noble mind, are, with the million, circumstances not a little disqualifying. What pleasure is in the power of the fortunate and the happy, by their notice and patronage, to brighten the countenance and glad the heart of such depressed youth! I am not so angry with mankind for their deaf economy of the purse:—The goods of this world cannot be divided, without being lessened—but why be a niggard of that which bestows bliss on a fellow-creature, yet takes nothing from our own means of enjoyment? We wrap ourselves up in the cloak of our own better-fortune, and turn away our eyes, lest the wants and woes of our brother-mortals should disturb the selfish apathy of our souls!

I am the worst hand in the world at asking a favor. That indirect address, that insinuating implication, which, without any positive request, plainly expresses your wish, is a talent not to be acquired at a plough-tail. Tell me then, for you can, in what periphrasis of language, in what circumvolution of phrase, I shall envelope yet not conceal this plain story.—"My dear Mr. Tait, my friend Mr. Duncan, whom I have the pleasure of introducing to you, is a young lad of your own profession, and a gentleman of much modesty and great worth. Perhaps it may be in your

your power to assist him in the, to him, important consideration of getting a place; but at all events, your notice and acquaintance will be a very great acquisition to him; and I dare pledge myself that he will never disgrace your favor."

You may possibly be surprised, Sir, at such a letter from me; 'tis, I own, in the usual way of calculating these matters, more than our acquaintance entitles me to; but my answer is short: Of all the men at your time of life, whom I knew in Edinburgh, you are the most accessible on the side on which I have assailed you. You are very much altered indeed from what you were when I knew you, if generosity point the path you will not tread, or humanity call to you in vain.

As to myself, a being to whose interest I believe you are still a well-wisher; I am here, breathing at all times, thinking sometimes, and rhyming now and then. Every situation has its share of the cares and pains of life, and my situation I am persuaded has a full ordinary allowance of its pleasures and enjoyments.

My best compliments to your father and Miss Tait. If you have an opportunity, please remember me in the solemn league and covenant

of friendship to Mrs. Lewis Hay. I am a wretch for not writing her; but I am so hackneyed with self-accusation in that way, that my conscience lies in my bosom with scarce the sensibility of an oyster in its shell. Where is Lady M'Kenzie? wherever she is, God bless her! I likewise beg leave to trouble you with compliments to Mr. Wm. Hamilton; Mrs. Hamilton and family; and Mrs. Chalmers, when you are in that country. Should you meet with Miss Nimmo, please remember me kindly to her.

No. XLIV.

To ——

DEAR SIR,

WHETHER in the way of my trade, I can be of any service to the Rev. Doctor,* is I fear very

* Dr. M'Gill, of Ayr. The Poet gives the best illustration of this letter in one addressed to Mr. Graham, *Dr. Currie's Ed. No.* 86.

ry doubtful. Ajax's shield consisted, I think, of seven bull hides and a plate of brass, which altogether set Hector's utmost force at defiance. Alas! I am not a Hector, and the worthy Doctor's foes are as securely armed as Ajax was. Ignorance, superstition, bigotry, stupidity, malevolence, self-conceit, envy—all strongly bound in a massy frame of brazen impudence. Good God, Sir! to such a shield, humor is the peck of a sparrow, and satire the pop-gun of a school-boy. Creation-disgracing *scelerats* such as they, God only can mend, and the Devil only can punish. In the comprehending way of Caligula, I wish they had all but one neck. I feel impotent as a child to the ardor of my wishes! O for a withering curse to blast the germins of their wicked machinations. O for a poisonous Tornado, winged from the Torrid Zone of Tartarus, to sweep the spreading crop of their villainous contrivances to the lowest hell!

No. XLV.

To Mr. ALEXANDER DALZIEL.*

FACTOR, FINDLAYSTON.

Ellisland, March 19, 1791.

MY DEAR SIR,

I HAVE taken the liberty to frank this letter to you, as it encloses an idle poem of mine, which I send you; and God knows you may perhaps pay dear enough for it if you read it through.

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* This gentleman, the factor, or steward, of Burns's noble friend, Lord Glencairn, with a view to encourage a second edition of the poems, laid the volume before his lordship, with such an account of the rustic bard's situation and prospects as from his slender acquaintance with him he could furnish. The result, as communicated to Burns by Mr. Dalziel, is highly creditable to the character of Lord Glencairn. After reading the book, his lordship declared that its merits greatly exceeded his expectation, and he took it with him as a *literary curiosity* to Edinburgh. He repeated his wishes to be of service to Burns, and desired Mr. Dalziel to inform him, that in patronizing the book, ushering it with effect into the world, or treating with

through. Not that this is my own opinion; but an author by the time he has composed and corrected his work, has quite pored away all his powers of critical discrimination.

I can easily guess from my own heart, what you have felt on a late most melancholy event. God knows what I have suffered, at the loss of my best friend, my first, my dearest patron and benefactor; the man to whom I owe all that I am and have! I am gone into mourning for him, and with more sincerity of grief than I fear some will, who by nature's ties ought to feel on the occasion.

I will be exceedingly obliged to you indeed, to let me know the news of the noble family, how the poor mother and the two sisters support their loss. I had a packet of poetic bagatelles ready to send to Lady Betty, when I saw the

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with the booksellers, he would most willingly give every aid in his power; adding his request that Burns would take the earliest opportunity of letting him know in what way or manner he could best further his interests. He also expressed a wish to see some of the unpublished manuscripts, with a view to establishing his character with the world. E.

the fatal tidings in the newspaper. I see by the same channel that the honored REMAINS of my noble patron, are designed to be brought to the family burial place. Dare I trouble you to let me know privately before the day of interment, that I may cross the country, and steal among the crowd, to pay a tear to the last sight of my ever revered benefactor? It will oblige me beyond expression.

No. XLVI.

MR. THOMAS SLOAN,

CARE OF WM. KENNEDY, ESQ. MANCHESTER.

Ellisland, Sept. 1, 1791.

MY DEAR SLOAN,

SUSPENCE is worse than disappointment, for that reason I hurry to tell you that I just now learn that Mr. Ballantine does not chuse to interfere

terfere more in the business. I am truly sorry for it, but cannot help it.

You blame me for not writing you sooner, but you will please to recollect that you omitted one little necessary piece of information;—your address.

However you know equally well, my hurried life, indolent temper, and strength of attachment. It must be a longer period than the longest life "in the world's hale and undegenerate days," that will make me forget so dear a friend as Mr. Sloan. I am prodigal enough at times, but I will not part with such a treasure as that.

I can easily enter into the *embarras* of your present situation. You know my favorite quotation from Young—

> ——— "On Reason build RESOLVE!
> "That column of true majesty in man."—

And that other favorite one from Thomson's Alfred—

> "What proves the hero truly GREAT,
> "Is, never, never to despair."

Or,

Or, shall I quote you an author of your acquaintance?

"—Whether DOING, SUFFERING, or FORBEARING,
"You may do miracles by—PERSEVERING."

I have nothing new to tell you. The few friends we have are going on in the old way. I sold my crop on this day se'nnight, and sold it very well. A guinea an acre, on an average, above value. But such a scene of drunkenness was hardly ever seen in this country. After the roup was over, about thirty people engaged in a battle, every man for his own hand, and fought it out for three hours. Nor was the scene much better in the house. No fighting, indeed, but folks lying drunk on the floor, and decanting, until both my dogs got so drunk by attending them, that they could not stand. You will easily guess how I enjoyed the scene; as I was no farther over than you used to see me.

Mrs. B. and family have been in Ayrshire these many weeks.

Farewel! and God bless you, my dear Friend!

No. XLVII.

To FRANCIS GROSE, Esq. F.A.S.

1792.

SIR,

I BELIEVE among all our Scots literati you have not met with professor Dugald Stewart, who fills the moral philosophy chair in the University of Edinburgh. To say that he is a man of the first parts, and what is more, a man of the first worth, to a gentleman of your general acquaintance, and who so much enjoys the luxury of unincumbered freedom and undisturbed privacy, is not perhaps recommendation enough:—but when I inform you that Mr. Stewart's principal characteristic is your favorite feature; *that* sterling independence of mind, which, though every man's right, so few men have the courage to claim, and fewer still the magnanimity to support:—When I tell you, that unseduced by splendor, and undisgusted by wretchedness, he appreciates the merits of the various actors in the great drama of life, merely as they perform

form their parts—in short, he is a man after your own heart, and I comply with his earnest request in letting you know that he wishes above all things to meet with you. His house, Catrine, is within less than a mile of Sorn Castle, which you proposed visiting; or if you could transmit him the inclosed, he would with the greatest pleasure, meet you any where in the neighbourhood. I write to Ayrshire to inform Mr. Stewart that I have acquitted myself of my promise. Should your time and spirits permit your meeting with Mr. Stewart, 'tis well; if not, I hope you will forgive this liberty, and I have at least an opportunity of assuring you with what truth and respect,

I am, Sir,

Your great admirer,

And very humble servant.

No. XLVIII.

TO THE SAME.

AMONG the many witch stories I have heard relating to Aloway kirk, I distinctly remember only two or three.

Upon a stormy night, amid whistling squalls of wind, and bitter blasts of hail; in short, on such a night as the devil would chuse to take the air in; a farmer or farmer's servant was plodding and plashing homeward with his plough irons on his shoulder, having been getting some repairs on them at a neighbouring smithy. His way lay by the kirk of Aloway, and being rather on the anxious look out in approaching a place so well known to be a favorite haunt of the devil and the devil's friends and emissaries, he was struck aghast by discovering through the horrors of the storm and stormy night, a light, which on his nearer approach, plainly shewed itself to proceed from the haunted edifice. Whether he had been fortified from above on his devout supplication, as is customary with people when they suspect the immediate presence of Satan; or whether,

whether, according to another custom, he had got courageously drunk at the smithy, I will not pretend to determine; but so it was that he ventured to go up to, nay into the very kirk. As good luck would have it his temerity came off unpunished.

The members of the infernal junto were all out on some midnight business or other, and he saw nothing but a kind of kettle or caldron, depending from the roof, over the fire, simmering some heads of unchristened children, limbs of executed malefactors, &c. for the business of the night.—It was, in for a penny, in for a pound, with the honest ploughman: so without ceremony he unhooked the caldron from off the fire, and pouring out the damnable ingredients, inverted it on his head, and carried it fairly home, where it remained long in the family, a living evidence of the truth of the story.

Another story which I can prove to be equally authentic, was as follows:

On a market day in the town of Ayr, a farmer from Carrick, and consequently whose way lay by the very gate of Aloway kirk-yard, in order to cross the river Doon at the old bridge, which is about two or three hundred yards further on than the said gate, had been detained by his business,

siness, 'till by the time he reached Aloway it was the wizard hour, between night and morning.

Though he was terrified, with a blaze streaming from the kirk, yet as it is a well-known fact that to turn back on these occasions is running by far the greatest risk of mischief, he prudently advanced on his road. When he had reached the gate of the kirk-yard, he was surprized and entertained, through the ribs and arches of an old gothic window, which still faces the highway, to see a dance of witches merrily footing it round their old sooty blackguard master, who was keeping them all alive with the power of his bagpipe. The farmer stopping his horse to observe them a little, could plainly descry the faces of many old women of his acquaintance and neighbourhood. How the gentleman was dressed, tradition does not say; but the ladies were all in their smocks: and one of them happening unluckily to have a smock which was considerably too short to answer all the purpose of that piece of dress, our farmer was so tickled, that he involuntarily burst out, with a loud laugh, "Weel luppen, Maggy wi' the short sark!" and recollecting himself, instantly spurred his horse to the top of his speed. I need not mention the universally known fact, that no diabolical power can pursue you beyond the middle of a running stream. Lucky it was for the poor farmer that the

the river Doon was so near, for notwithstanding the speed of his horse, which was a good one, against he reached the middle of the arch of the bridge, and consequently the middle of the stream, the pursuing, vengeful hags, were so close at his heels, that one of them actually sprung to seize him; but it was too late, nothing was on her side of the stream but the horse's tail, which immediately gave way at her infernal grip, as if blasted by a stroke of lightning; but the farmer was beyond her reach. However, the unsightly, tail-less condition of the vigorous steed was to the last hour of the noble creature's life, an awful warning to the Carrick farmers, not to stay too late in Ayr markets.

The last relation I shall give, though equally true, is not so well identified as the two former, with regard to the scene: but as the best authorities give it for Aloway, I shall relate it.

On a summer's evening, about the time that nature puts on her sables to mourn the expiry of the chearful day, a Shepherd boy belonging to a farmer in the immediate neighbourhood of Aloway Kirk, had just folded his charge, and was returning home. As he passed the kirk, in the adjoining field, he fell in with a crew of men and women, who were busy pulling stems of the

the plant Ragwort. He observed that as each person pulled a Ragwort, he or she got astride of it, and called out, "up horsie!" on which the Ragwort flew off, like Pegasus, through the air with its rider. The foolish boy likewise pulled his Ragwort, and cried with the rest, "up horsie!" and, strange to tell, away he flew with the company. The first stage at which the cavalcade stopt, was a Merchant's wine cellar in Bourdeaux, where, without saying by your leave, they quaffed away at the best the cellar could afford, until the morning, foe to the imps and works of darkness, threatened to throw light on the matter, and frightened them from their carousals.

The poor shepherd lad, being equally a stranger to the scene and the liquor, heedlessly got himself drunk; and when the rest took horse, he fell asleep, and was found so next day by some of the people belonging to the Merchant. Somebody that understood Scotch, asking him what he was, he said he was such-a-one's herd in Aloway, and by some means or other getting home again, he lived long to tell the world the wondrous tale.

I am, &c. &c.*

No.

* This letter was copied from the *Censura Literaria*,

No. XLIX.

To R. GRAHAM, Esq. FINTRAY.

December, 1792.

SIR,

I HAVE been surprised, confounded, and distracted, by Mr. Mitchel, the collector, telling me that he has received an order from your Board to enquire into my political conduct, and blaming me as a person disaffected to Government.

1786. It was communicated to the Editor of that work by Mr. Gilchrist of Stamford, with the following remark.

"In a collection of miscellaneous papers of the Antiquary Grose, which I purchased a few years since, I found the following letter written to him by Burns, when the former was collecting the Antiquities of Scotland: When I premise it was on the second tradition that he afterwards formed the inimitable tale of "Tam O'Shanter," I cannot doubt of its being read with great interest. It were "burning day-light" to point out to a reader, (and who is not a reader of Burns?) the thoughts he afterwards transplanted into the rhythmical narrative."

O. G.

ment. Sir, you are a husband—and a father.—You know what you would feel, to see the much-loved wife of your bosom, and your helpless, prattling little ones, turned adrift into the world, degraded and disgraced from a situation in which they had been respectable and respected, and left almost without the necessary support of a miserable existence. Alas, Sir! must I think that such, soon, will be my lot! and from the d–mned, dark insinuations of hellish groundless envy too! I believe, Sir, I may aver it, and in the sight of Omniscience, that I would not tell a deliberate falsehood, no, not though even worse horrors, if worse can be, than those I have mentioned, hung over my head; and I say, that the allegation, whatever villain has made it, is a lie! To the British Constitution, on revolution principles, next after my God, I am most devoutly attached! You, Sir, have been much and generously my friend.—Heaven knows how warmly I have felt the obligation, and how gratefully I have thanked you.—Fortune, Sir, has made you powerful, and me impotent; has given you patronage, and me dependance.—I would not, for my single self, call on your humanity; were such my insular, unconnected situation, I would despise the tear that now swells in my eye—I could brave misfortune, I could face ruin; for at the worst, "Death's thousand doors stand open;"

but, good God! the tender concerns that I have mentioned, the claims and ties that I see at this moment, and feel around me, how they unnerve Courage, and wither Resolution! To your patronage, as a man of some genius, you have allowed me a claim; and your esteem, as an honest man, I know is my due: To these, Sir, permit me to appeal; by these may I adjure you to save me from that misery which threatens to overwhelm me, and which, with my latest breath I will say it, I have not deserved.

No. L.

To Mr. T. CLARKE, Edinburgh.

July 16, 1792.

Mr. Burns begs leave to present his most respectful compliments to Mr. Clarke.—Mr. B. some time ago did himself the honor of writing Mr. C. respecting coming out to the country, to give a little musical instruction in a highly respectable family, where Mr. C. may have his own terms, and may be as happy as indolence, the Devil, and the gout will permit him. Mr. B.

B. knows well how Mr. C. is engaged with another family; but cannot Mr. C. find two or three weeks to spare to each of them? Mr. B. is deeply impressed with, and awefully conscious of, the high importance of Mr. C.'s time, whether in the winged moments of symphonious exhibition, at the keys of harmony, while listening Seraphs cease their own less delightful strains;—or in the drowsy hours of slumb'rous repose, in the arms of his dearly-beloved elbow-chair, where the frowsy, but potent power of indolence, circumfuses her vapours round, and sheds her dews on, the head of her darling son. —But half a line conveying half a meaning from Mr. C. would make Mr. B. the very happiest of mortals.

No. LI.

To Mrs. DUNLOP.

Dec. 31, 1792.

DEAR MADAM,

A HURRY of business, thrown in heaps by my absence, has until now prevented my returning my grateful acknowledgements to the good

good family of Dunlop, and you in particular, for that hospitable kindness which rendered the four days I spent under that genial roof, four of the pleasantest I ever enjoyed.—Alas, my dearest friend! how few and fleeting are those things we call pleasures! On my road to Ayrshire, I spent a night with a friend whom I much valued; a man whose days promised to be many; and on Saturday last we laid him in the dust!

Jan. 2, 1793.

I HAVE just received yours of the 30th, and feel much for your situation. However, I heartily rejoice in your prospect of recovery from that vile jaundice. As to myself, I am better, though not quite free of my complaint.—You must not think, as you seem to insinuate, that in my way of life I want exercise. Of that I have enough; but occasional hard drinking is the devil to me. Against this I have again and again bent my resolution, and have greatly succeeded. Taverns I have totally abandoned: it is the private parties in the family way, among the hard drinking gentlemen of this country, that do me the mischief—but even this, I have more than half given over.*

Mr.

* The following extract from a letter addressed by Mr. Bloomfield to the Earl of Buchan, contains so interesting an

Mr. Corbet can be of little service to me at present; at least I should be shy of applying. I cannot possibly be settled as a supervisor, for several years. I must wait the rotation of the list, and there are twenty names before mine.—I might indeed get a job of officiating, where a settled

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an exhibition of the modesty inherent in real worth, and so philosophical, and at the same time, so poetical an estimate of the different characters and destinies of Burns and its author, that I should esteem myself culpable were I to withhold it from the public view. E.

" The illustrious soul that has left amongst us the name of Burns, has often been lowered down to a comparison with me; but the comparison exists more in circumstances than in essentials. That man stood up with the stamp of superior intellect on his brow; a visible greatness: and great and patriotic subjects would only have called into action the powers of his mind, which lay inactive while he played calmly and exquisitely the pastoral pipe.

The letters to which I have alluded in my preface to the "Rural Tales," were friendly warnings, pointed with immediate reference to the fate of that extraordinary man. " Remember Burns," has been the watch-word of my friends. I do remember Burns; but I *am not* Burns! neither have I his fire to fan or to quench; nor his passions to control! Where then is my merit if I make a peaceful voyage

settled supervisor was ill, or aged; but that hauls me from my family, as I could not remove them on such an uncertainty. Besides, some envious, malicious devil, has raised a little demur on my political principles, and I wish to let that matter settle before I offer myself too much in the eye of my supervisors. I have set, henceforth, a seal on my lips, as to these unlucky politics; but to you, I must breathe my sentiments. In this, as in every thing else, I shall shew the undisguised emotions of my soul. War I deprecate: misery and ruin to thousands, are in the blast that announces the destructive demon. But

* * * *

The remainder of this letter has been torn away by some barbarous hand.

No.

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voyage on a smooth sea and with no mutiny on board? To a lady, (I have it from herself) who remonstrated with him on his danger from drink, and the pursuits of some of his associates, he replied, "Madam, they would not thank me for my company, if I did not drink with them:—I *must* give them a slice of my constitution." How much to be regretted that he did not give them thinner slices of his constitution, that it might have lasted longer!"

London, 1782.

No. LII.

To PATRICK MILLER, Esq. of Dalswinton.

April, 1793.

SIR,

My poems having just come out in another edition, will you do me the honor to accept of a copy? A mark of my gratitude to you, as a gentleman to whose goodness I have been much indebted; of my respect for you, as a patriot who, in a venal, sliding age, stands forth the champion of the liberties of my country; and of my veneration for you, as a man, whose benevolence of heart does honor to human nature.

There *was* a time, Sir, when I was your dependant: this language *then* would have been like the vile incense of flattery—I could not have used it.—Now that connection* is at an end, do me the honor to accept of this *honest* tribute of respect from, Sir,

Your much indebted humble Servant.

No.

* Alluding to the time when he held the farm of Ellisland, as tenant to Mr. M.

No. LIII.

To JOHN FRANCIS ERSKINE, Esq.* of Mar.

Dumfries, 13th April, 1793.

SIR,

DEGENERATE as human Nature is said to be; and in many instances, worthless and unprincipled it is; still there are bright examples to the contrary: examples that even in the eyes of superior beings, must shed a lustre on the name of Man.

Such an example have I now before me, when you, Sir, came forward to patronise and befriend

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* This gentleman, most obligingly favoured the Editor with a perfect copy of the original letter, and allowed him to lay it before the public.—It is partly printed in *Dr. Currie's Edition.*

It will be necessary to state, that in consequence of the poet's freedom of remark on public measures, maliciously misrepresented to the Board of Excise, he was represented as actually dismissed from his office.—This report induced Mr. Erskine to propose a subscription in his favour, which was refused by the poet with that elevation of sentiment that peculiarly characterised his mind, and which is so happily displayed in this letter. See letter No. 49, in the present volume, written by Burns, with even more than his accustomed pathos and eloquence, in further explanation. E.

befriend a distant obscure stranger, merely because poverty had made him helpless, and his British hardihood of mind had provoked the arbitrary wantonness of power. My much esteemed friend, Mr. Riddel of Glenriddel, has just read me a paragraph of a letter he had from you. Accept, Sir, of the silent throb of gratitude; for words would but mock the emotions of my soul.

You have been misinformed as to my final dismission from the Excise; I am still in the service.—Indeed, but for the exertions of a gentleman who must he known to you, Mr. Graham of Fintray, a gentleman who has ever been my warm and generous friend, I had, without so much as a hearing, or the slightest previous intimation, been turned adrift, with my helpless family to all the horrors of want.---Had I had any other resource, probably I might have saved them the trouble of a dismission; but the little money I gained by my publication, is almost every guinea embarked, to save from ruin an only brother, who, though one of the worthiest, is by no means one of the most fortunate of men.

In my defence to their accusations, I said, that whatever might be my sentiments of republics, ancient

ancient or modern, as to Britain, I abjured the idea:—That a CONSTITUTION, which, in its original principles, experience had proved to be every way fitted for our happiness in society, it would be insanity to sacrifice to an untried visionary theory:—That, in consideration of my being situated in a department, however humble, immediately in the hands of people in power, I had forborne taking any active part, either personally, or as an author, in the present business of REFORM. But that, where I must declare my sentiments, I would say there existed a system of corruption between the executive power and the representative part of the legislature, which boded no good to our glorious CONSTITUTION; and which every patriotic Briton must wish to see amended.—Some such sentiments as these, I stated in a letter to my generous patron Mr. Graham, which he laid before the Board at large; where, it seems, my last remark gave great offence; and one of our supervisors general, a Mr. Corbet, was instructed to enquire on the spot, and to document me—"that my business was to act, *not to think;* and that whatever might be men or measures, it was for me to be *silent* and *obedient.*"

Mr. Corbet was likewise my steady friend; so between

between Mr. Graham and him, I have been partly forgiven; only I understand that all hopes of my getting officially forward, are blasted.

Now, Sir, to the business in which I would more immediately interest you. The partiality of my COUNTRYMEN, has brought me forward as a man of genius, and has given me a character to support. In the POET I have avowed manly and independent sentiments, which I trust will be found in the MAN. Reasons of no less weight than the support of a wife and family, have pointed out as the eligible, and situated as I was, the only eligible line of life for me, my present occupation. Still my honest fame is my dearest concern; and a thousand times have I trembled at the idea of those *degrading* epithets that malice or misrepresentation may affix to my name. I have often, in blasting anticipation, listened to some future hackney scribbler, with the heavy malice of savage stupidity, exulting in his hireling paragraphs—"BURNS notwithstanding the *fanfaronade* of independence to be found in his works, and after having been held forth to public view, and to public estimation as a man of some genius, yet, quite destitute of resources within himself to support his borrowed dignity, he dwindled into a paltry exciseman, and slunk out the rest of his insignificant existence in the meanest

meanest of pursuits, and among the vilest of mankind."

In your illustrious hands, Sir, permit me to lodge my disavowal and defiance of these slanderous falsehoods.—BURNS was a poor man from birth, and an exciseman by necessity: but —*I will* say it! the sterling of his honest worth, no poverty could debase, and his independent British mind, oppression might bend, but could not subdue. Have not I, to me, a more precious stake in my Country's welfare, than the richest dukedom in it?—I have a large family of children, and the prospect of many more. I have three sons, who, I see already, have brought into the world souls ill qualified to inhabit the bodies of SLAVES.—Can I look tamely on, and see any machination to wrest from them the birthright of my boys,—the little independent BRITONS, in whose veins runs my own blood?—No! I will not! should my heart's blood stream around my attempt to defend it!

Does any man tell me, that my full efforts can be of no service; and that it does not belong to my humble station to meddle with the concern of a nation?

I can tell him, that it is on such individuals as I, that

I, that a nation has to rest, both for the hand of support, and the eye of intelligence. The uninform'd MOB, may swell a nation's bulk; and the titled, tinsel, courtly throng, may be its feathered ornament; but the number of those who are elevated enough in life to reason and to reflect; yet low enough to keep clear of the venal contagion of a court;—these are a nation's strength.

I know not how to apologize for the impertinent length of this epistle; but one small request I must ask of you farther—When you have honored this letter with a perusal, please to commit it to the flames. BURNS, in whose behalf you have so generously interested yourself, I have here, in his native colors drawn *as he is*; but should any of the people in whose hands is the very bread he eats, get the least knowledge of the picture, *it would ruin the poor* BARD *for ever!*

My poems having just come out in another edition, I beg leave to present you with a copy, as a small mark of that high esteem and ardent gratitude, with which I have the honor to be,

Sir,

Your deeply indebted,
And ever devoted humble servant.

No.

No. LIV.

To Mr. ROBERT AINSLIE.

April 26, 1793.

I am d—mnably out of humour, my dear Ainslie, and that is the reason, why I take up the pen to *you*: 'tis the nearest way, (*probatum est*) to recover my spirits again.

I received your last, and was much entertained with it; but I will not at this time, nor at any other time, answer it.—Answer a letter? I never could answer a letter in my life!—I have written many a letter in return for letters I have received; but then—they were original matter—spurt-away! zig, here; zag, there; as if the Devil that, my Grannie (an old woman indeed!) often told me, rode in will-o'-wisp, or, in her more classic phrase, Spunkie, were looking over my elbow. —Happy thought that idea has engendered in my head! Spunkie—thou shalt henceforth be my symbol, signature, and tutelary genius! Like thee, hap-step-and-lowp, here-awa-there-awa, higglety-pigglety, pell-mell, hither-and-yon, ram-stam,

ram-stam, happy-go-lucky, up tails-a'-by-the light-o'the-moon; has been, is, and shall be, my progress through the Mosses and Moors of this vile, bleak, barren wilderness of a life of ours.

Come then my guardian spirit! like thee, may I skip away, amusing myself by and at my own light: and if any opaque-souled lubber of mankind complain that my elfine, lambent, glimmerous wanderings have misled his stupid steps over precipices, or into bogs; let the thick-headed Blunderbuss recollect, that he is not SPUNKIE: —that

> SPUNKIE's wanderings could not copied be;
> Amid these perils none durst walk but he.—

* * * *

I have no doubt but scholarcraft may be caught as a Scotsman catches the itch,—by friction. How else can you account for it, that born blockheads, by mere dint of *handling* books, grow so wise that even they themselves are equally convinced of and surpriz'd at their own parts? I once carried this philosophy to that degree that in a knot of country folks who had a library amongst them, and who, to the honor of their good sense, made me factotum in the business; one of our members, a little, wise-looking,

squat, upright, jabbering body of a taylor, I advised him, instead of turning over the leaves, *to bind the book on his back.*—Johnie took the hint; and as our meetings were every fourth Saturday, and Pricklouse having a good Scots mile to walk in coming, and, of course, another in returning, Bodkin was sure to lay his hands on some heavy quarto, or ponderous folio, with, and under which, wrapt up in his grey plaid, he grew wise, as he grew weary, all the way home. He carried this so far, that an old musty Hebrew concordance which we had in a present from a neighbouring priest, by mere dint of applying it, as doctors do a blistering plaister, between his shoulders, Stitch, in a dozen pilgrimages, acquired as much rational theology as the said priest had done by forty years perusal of the pages.

Tell me, and tell me truly, what you think of this theory.

Yours,

SPUNKIE.

No. LV.

To Miss K————.

MADAM,

PERMIT me to present you with the enclosed song as a small though grateful tribute for the honor of your acquaintance. I have, in these verses, attempted some faint sketches of your portrait in the unembellished simple manner of descriptive TRUTH.—Flattery, I leave to your LOVERS, whose exaggerating fancies may make them imagine you still nearer perfection than you really are.

Poets, Madam, of all mankind, feel most forcibly the powers of BEAUTY; as, if they are really POETS of nature's making, their feelings must be finer, and their taste more delicate than most of the world. In the chearful bloom of SPRING, or the pensive mildness of AUTUMN; the grandeur of SUMMER, or the hoary majesty of WINTER; the poet feels a charm unknown to the rest of his species. Even the sight of a fine

flower, or the company of a fine woman, (by far the finest part of God's works below) have sensations for the poetic heart that the HERD of man are strangers to.—On this last account, Madam, I am, as in many other things, indebted to Mr. Hamilton's kindness in introducing me to you. Your lovers may view you with a wish, I look on you with pleasure; their hearts, in your presence, may glow with desire, mine rises with admiration.

That the arrows of misfortune, however they should, as incident to humanity, glance a slight wound, may never reach your *heart*—that the snares of villainy may never beset you in the road of life—that INNOCENCE may hand you by the path of HONOR to the dwelling of PEACE, is the sincere wish of him who has the honor to be, &c.

No. LVI.

To LADY GLENCAIRN.

MY LADY,

THE honor you have done your poor poet, in writing him so very obliging a letter, and the pleasure the inclosed beautiful verses have given him, came very seasonably to his aid amid the chearless gloom and sinking despondency of diseased nerves and December weather. As to forgetting the family of Glencairn, Heaven is my witness with what sincerity I could use those old verses which please me more in their rude simplicity than the most elegant lines I ever saw.

If thee Jerusalem I forget,
Skill part from my right hand.—

My tongue to my mouth's roof let cleave,
If I do thee forget
Jerusalem, and thee above
My chief joy do not set.—

When I am tempted to do any thing improper, I dare not, because I look on myself as accountable

able to your ladyship and family. Now and then when I have the honor to be called to the tables of the great, if I happen to meet with any mortification from the stately stupidity of self-sufficient squires, or the luxuriant insolence of upstart nabobs, I get above the creatures by calling to remembrance that I am patronised by the Noble House of Glencairn; and at gala-times, such as New-year's day, a christening, or the Kirn-night, when my punch-bowl is brought from its dusty corner and filled up in honor of the occasion, I begin with,—*The Countess of Glencairn!* My good woman with the enthusiasm of a grateful heart, next cries, *My Lord!* and so the toast goes on until I end with *Lady Harriet's little angel!* whose epithalamium I have pledged myself to write.

When I received your ladyship's letter, I was just in the act of transcribing for you some verses I have lately composed; and meant to have sent them my first leisure hour, and acquainted you with my late change of life. I mentioned to my lord, my fears concerning my farm. Those fears were indeed too true; it is a bargain would have ruined me but for the lucky circumstance of my having an excise commission.

People may talk as they please, of the ignomi-

ny

ny of the excise; 50l. a year will support my wife and children and keep me independent of the world; and I would much rather have it said that my profession borrowed credit from me, than that I borrowed credit from my profession. Another advantage I have in this business, is the knowledge it gives me of the various shades of human character, consequently assisting me vastly in my poetic pursuits. I had the most ardent enthusiasm for the muses when nobody knew me, but myself, and that ardour is by no means cooled now that my lord Glencairn's goodness has introduced me to all the world. Not that I am in haste for the press. I have no idea of publishing, else I certainly had consulted my noble generous patron; but after acting the part of an honest man, and supporting my family, my whole wishes and views are directed to poetic pursuits. I am aware that though I were to give performances to the world superior to my former works, still if they were of the same kind with those, the comparative reception they would meet with would mortify me. I have turned my thoughts on the drama. I do not mean the stately buskin of the tragic muse,

* * * *

Does not your ladyship think that an Edinburgh theatre would be more amused with affectation, folly and whim of true Scotish growth, than manners

ners which by far the greatest part of the audience can only know at second hand?

I have the honor to be

Your ladyship's ever devoted

And grateful humble servant.

LVII.

To THE EARL OF BUCHAN,

WITH A COPY OF "BRUCE'S ADDRESS TO HIS TROOPS AT BANNOCKBURN."

Dumfries, 12th Jan. 1794.

MY LORD,

WILL your lordship allow me to present you with the inclosed little composition of mine, as a small tribute of gratitude for that acquaintance with which you have been pleased to honor me. Independent of my enthusiasm as a Scotsman, I have rarely met with any thing in history which interests my feelings as a man, equal with the story of Bannockburn. On the one hand, a cruel, but able usurper, leading on the finest army in Europe to extinguish the last spark of freedom

freedom among a greatly-daring, and greatly-injured people: on the other hand, the desperate relics of a gallant nation, devoting themselves to rescue their bleeding country, or perish with her.

Liberty! thou art a prize truly, and indeed invaluable!—for never canst thou be too dearly bought!

I have the honor to be, &c.

No. LVIII.

To THE EARL OF GLENCAIRN.

MY LORD,

WHEN you cast your eye on the name at the bottom of this letter, and on the title page of the book I do myself the honor to send your lordship, a more pleasurable feeling than my vanity tells me, that it must be a name not entirely unknown

unknown to you. The generous patronage of your late illustrious brother found me in the lowest obscurity: he introduced my rustic muse to the partiality of my country; and to him I owe all. My sense of his goodness, and the anguish of my soul at losing my truly noble protector and friend, I have endeavoured to express in a poem to his memory, which I have now published. This edition is just from the press; and in my gratitude to the dead, and my respect for the living (fame belies you, my lord, if you possess not the same dignity of man, which was your noble brother's characteristic feature) I had destined a copy for the Earl of Glencairn. I learnt just now that you are in town:—allow me to present it you.

I know, my lord, such is the vile, venal contagion which pervades the world of letters, that professions of respect from an author, particularly from a poet, to a lord, are more than suspicious. I claim my by-past conduct, and my feelings at this moment, as exceptions to the too just conclusion. Exalted as are the honors of your lordship's name, and unnoted as is the obscurity of mine; with the uprightness of an honest man, I come before your lordship, with an offering, however humble, 'tis all I have to give, of my grateful respect; and to beg of you,

my

my lord,—'tis all I have to ask of you, that you will do me the honor to accept of it.

I have the honor to be, &c.*

No. LIX.

To Dr. ANDERSON.

SIR,

I AM much indebted to my worthy friend Dr. Blacklock for introducing me to a gentleman of Dr. Anderson's celebrity; but when you do me the honor to ask my assistance in your purposed publication, Alas, Sir! you might as well think to cheapen a little honesty at the sign of an Advocate's wig, or humility under the Geneva band. I am a miserable hurried devil, worn to the marrow in the friction of holding the noses of the poor publicans to the grindstone of

* The original letter is in the possession of the Honorable Mrs. Holland, of Poynings. From a memorandum on the back of the letter, it appears to have been written in May 1794.

of Excise; and like Milton's Satan, for private reasons, am forced

"*To do what yet tho' damn'd I would abhor;*"—

and except a couplet or two of honest execration

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No. LX.

To Mrs. DUNLOP.

Castle Douglas, 25th June, 1794.

Here in a solitary inn, in a solitary village, am I set by myself, to amuse my brooding fancy as I may.—Solitary confinement, you know, is Howard's favorite idea of reclaiming sinners; so let me consider by what fatality it happens that I have so long been exceeding sinful as to neglect the correspondence of the most valued friend I have on earth. To tell you that I have been in poor health, will not be excuse enough, though it is true. I am afraid I am about to suffer for the follies of my youth. My medical friends threaten me with a flying gout; but I trust they are mistaken.

I am

I am just going to trouble your critical patience with the first sketch of a stanza I have been framing as I paced along the road. The subject is LIBERTY: You know, my honored friend, how dear the theme is to me. I design it an irregular Ode for General Washington's birth-day. After having mentioned the degeneracy of other kingdoms I come to Scotland thus:

Thee, Caledonia, thy wild heaths among,
Thee, famed for martial deed and sacred song,
To thee I turn with swimming eyes;
Where is that soul of freedom fled?
Immingled with the mighty dead!
Beneath that hallowed turf where WALLACE lies!
Hear it not, WALLACE, in thy bed of death!
Ye babbling winds, in silence sweep;
Disturb not ye the hero's sleep,
Nor give the coward secret breath.—
Is this the power in freedom's war
That wont to bid the battle rage?
Behold that eye which shot immortal hate,
Crushing the despot's proudest bearing,
That arm which, nerved with thundering fate,
Braved usurpation's boldest daring!
One quenched in darkness like the sinking star,
And one the palsied arm of tottering, powerless age.

You

You will probably have another scrawl from me in a stage or two.

No. LXI.

To Mr. JAMES JOHNSON.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

You should have heard from me long ago; but over and above some vexatious share in the pecuniary losses of these accursed times, I have all this winter been plagued with low spirits and blue devils, so that *I have almost hung my harp on the willow trees.*

I am just now busy correcting a new edition of my poems, and this, with my ordinary business, finds me in full employment.*

I send you by my friend Mr. Wallace forty one songs for your fifth volume; if we cannot finish it any other way, what would you think of Scots

* Burns's anxiety with regard to the correctness of his writings was very great. Being questioned as to his mode of composition, he replied, "All my poetry is the effect of easy composition, but of *laborious correction.*"

Scots words to some beautiful Irish airs? In the mean time, at your leisure, give a copy of the Museum to my worthy friend Mr. Peter Hill, Bookseller, to bind for me, interleaved with blank leaves, exactly as he did the Laird of Glenriddel's,* that I may insert every anecdote I can learn, together with my own criticisms and remarks on the songs.—A copy of this kind I shall leave with you, the editor, to publish at some after period, by way of making the Museum a book famous to the end of time, and you renowned for ever.

I have got an Highland Dirk for which I have great veneration; as it once was the dirk of *Lord Balmerino*. It fell into bad hands, who stripped it of the silver mounting, as well as the knife and fork. I have some thoughts of sending it to your care, to get it mounted anew.

Thank you for the copies of my Volunteer Ballad.—Our friend Clarke has done *indeed* well! 'tis chaste and beautiful. I have not met with any thing that has pleased me so much. You know, I am no Connoisseur; but that I am an Amateur—will be allowed me.

No.

* This is the manuscript book containing the remarks on Scottish songs and ballads, presented to the public, with considerable additions, in this volume.

No. LXII.

To Miss FONTENELLE.

ACCOMPANYING A PROLOGUE TO BE SPOKEN FOR HER BENEFIT.

MADAM,

In such a bad world as ours, those who add to the scanty sum of our pleasures, are positively our benefactors. To you Madam, on our humble Dumfries boards, I have been more indebted for entertainment than ever I was in prouder theatres. Your charms as a woman would insure applause to the most indifferent actress, and your theatrical talents would insure admiration to the plainest figure. This, Madam, is not the unmeaning, or insiduous compliment of the frivolous or interested; I pay it from the same honest impulse that the sublime of nature excites my admiration, or her beauties give me delight.

Will the foregoing lines be of any service to you on your approaching benefit night? If they will, I shall be prouder of my muse than ever. They are nearly extempore: I know they have no great

great merit; but though they should add but little to the entertainment of the evening, they give me the happiness of an opportunity to declare how much I have the honor to be, &c.

No. LXIII.

To PETER MILLER, Jun. Esq.* of Dalswinton.

Dumfries, Nov. 1794.

DEAR SIR,

Your offer is indeed truly generous, and most sincerely do I thank you for it; but in my present situation, I find that I dare not accept it. You well know my political sentiments; and were I an insular individual, unconnected with a wife and a family of children, with the most fervid enthusiasm I would have volunteered my services: I then could and would have despised all consequences that might have ensued.

 My

* In a conversation with his friend Mr. Perry, (the proprietor of "The Morning Chronicle,") Mr. Miller represented

My prospect in the Excise is something; at least, it is, encumbered as I am with the welfare, the very existence, of near half-a-score of helpless individuals, what I dare not sport with.

In the mean time, they are most welcome to my Ode; only, let them insert it as a thing they have met with by accident and unknown to me. —Nay, if Mr. Perry, whose honor, after your character of him I cannot doubt; if he will give me an address and channel by which any thing will come safe from those spies with which he may be certain that his correspondence is beset, I will now and then send him any bagatelle that I may write. In the present hurry of Europe, nothing but news and politics will be regarded; but against the days of peace, which Heaven

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represented to that gentleman the insufficiency of Burns's salary to answer the imperious demands of a numerous family. In their sympathy for his misfortunes, and in their regret that his talents were nearly lost to the world of letters, these gentlemen agreed on the plan of settling him in London.

To accomplish this most desirable object, Mr. Perry, very spiritedly, made the Poet a handsome offer of an annual stipend for the exercise of his talents in his newspaper. Burns's reasons for refusing this offer are stated in the present letter. E.

Heaven send soon, my little assistance may perhaps fill up an idle column of a Newspaper. I have long had it in my head to try my hand in the way of little prose essays, which I propose sending into the world through the medium of some Newspaper; and should these be worth his while, to these Mr. Perry shall be welcome; and all my reward shall be, his treating me with his paper, which, by the bye, to any body who has the least relish for wit, is a high treat indeed.

With the most grateful esteem, I am ever,

Dear Sir, &c.

No. LXIV.

To GAVIN HAMILTON, Esq.

Dumfries.

MY DEAR SIR,

It is indeed with the highest satisfaction that I congratulate you on the return of "days of ease, and nights of pleasure," after the horrid hours of misery, in which I saw you suffering existence when I was last in Ayr-

shire. I seldom pray for any body. " I'm " baith dead sweer, and wretched ill o't." But most fervently do I beseech the great Director of this world, that you may live long and be happy, but that you may live no longer than while you are happy. It is needless for me to advise you to have a reverend care of your health. I know you will make it a point never, at one time, to drink more than a pint of wine; (I mean an English pint,) and that you will never be witness to more than one bowl of punch at a time; and that cold drams you will never more taste. I am well convinced too, that after drinking, perhaps boiling punch, you will never mount your horse and gallop home in a chill, late hour.—Above all things, as I understand you are now in habits of intimacy with that *Boanerges* of gospel powers, *Father Auld*,* be earnest with him that he will wrestle

* The Rev. Wm. Auld, the then Mininister of Mauchline. This man was of a morose and malicious disposition. He had quarrelled with Mr. Gavin Hamilton's father, and sought every occasion of revenging himself on the son. Burns dearly loved Gavin Hamilton, and could not view this conduct with indifference: besides, Father Auld in his religious tenets was highly calvinistic, dealing damnation around him with no sparing hand. He was also superstitious and

wrestle in prayer for you, that you may see the vanity of vanities in trusting to, or even practising the carnal moral works of *charity*, *humanity*, *generosity*, and *forgiveness;* things which you

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and bigotted in the extreme:—Excellent marks for the poet! The following specimens of Father Auld will shew his desire to provoke and irritate Mr. Hamilton, and are a full display of the liberality of his sentiments in matters of religion.

He unwarrantably refused to christen Mr. Hamilton's child for the following reasons:—that Mr. Hamilton rode on Sundays—that he had ordered a person to dig a few potatoes in his garden on the Sabbath-day, (for which he was cited before the Kirk!) He also charged him with dining in a public house on a *King's fast day*, with two gentlemen, and that they were even heard to *whistle* and *sing* after dinner.—Moreover, which was the heaviest and most awful charge of all—he, Mr. Auld, heard Gavin Hamilton say, "*D-mn it*," in his own presence!

All this idle and vexatious folly tended, as might be expected, to alienate the mind of Mr. Hamilton both from the parson and his pulpit. Father Auld and his adherents charged him with neglect of religion and disrespect for its professors. The poet took his friend and patron's part, and repelled the attack by extolling Mr. Hamilton's elevation of sentiment, his readiness to forgive injuries, and, above all, his universal active benevolence. These excellent qualities Burns opposed to the fierceness, fanaticism, and

you practised so flagrantly that it was evident you delighted in them; neglecting, or perhaps, prophanely despising the *wholesome doctrine* of "Faith without works, the only anchor of salvation."

A hymn of thanksgiving would, in my opinion, be highly becoming from you at present; and in my zeal for your well-being, I earnestly press it on you to be diligent in chanting over the two inclosed pieces of sacred poesy. My best compliments to Mrs. Hamilton and Miss Kennedy.

Yours in the L——d

R. B.

No.

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and monkish gloom of this class of priests. His sentiments on the subject are given in this letter with infinite address, and in a strain of sly, covert humour that he has seldom surpassed. He is equally sly, but more explicit in his poetical dedication of his works to Gavin Hamilton. —In a copy, in the poet's writing, that I have seen, the circumstance of riding on the Sabbath-day is thus neatly introduced.

"He sometimes gallops on a Sunday,
"An' pricks the beast as it were Monday."

E.

No LXV.

To Mr. SAMUEL CLARKE, jun. Dumfries.

Sunday Morning.

DEAR SIR,

I was, I know, drunk last night, but I am sober this morning. From the expressions Capt. ———, made use of to me, had I had nobody's welfare to care for but my own, we should certainly have come, according to the manners of the world, to the necessity of murdering one another about the business. The words were such as, generally, I believe, end in a brace of pistols; but I am still pleased to think that I did not ruin the peace and welfare of a wife and a family of children in a drunken squabble. Farther you know that the report of certain political opinions being mine, has already once before brought me to the brink of destruction. I dread lest last night's business may be misrepresented in the same way.—You, I beg, will take care to prevent it. I tax your wish for Mr. Burns's welfare with the task of waiting as soon as possible, on every gentleman who was present, and state this to him, and, as you please, shew him this letter. What, after all, was the obnoxious toast? "May our success in the present war be

"equal

"equal to the justice of our cause."—A toast that the most outrageous frenzy of loyalty cannot object to. I request and beg that this morning you will wait on the parties present at the foolish dispute. I shall only add, that I am truly sorry that a man who stood so high in my estimation as Mr. ——, should use me in the manner in which I conceive he has done.*

No.

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* At this period of our Poet's life, when political animosity was made the ground of private quarrel, the following foolish verses were sent as an attack on Burns and his friends for their political opinions. They were written by some member of a club styling themselves the *Loyal Natives* of Dumfries, or rather by the united genius of that club, which was more distinguished for drunken loyalty, than either for respectability or poetical talent. The verses were handed over the table to Burns at a convivial meeting, and he instantly indorsed the subjoined reply.

The *Loyal Natives'* Verses.

Ye sons of sedition give ear to my song,
Let Syme, BURNS, and Maxwell, pervade every throng,
With, Craken the attorney, and Mundell the quack,
Send Willie the monger to hell with a smack.

Burns—extempore.

Ye true "Loyal Natives" attend to my song,
In uproar and riot rejoice the night long;
From *envy* and hatred your corps is exempt;
But where is your shield from the *darts of contempt*?

No.

No. LXVI.

To Mr. ALEXANDER FINDLATER,

SUPERVISOR OF EXCISE, DUMFRIES.

SIR,

Inclosed are the two schemes. I would not have troubled you with the collector's one, but for suspicion lest it be not right. Mr. Erskine promised me to make it right, if you will have the goodness to shew him how. As I have no copy of the scheme for myself, and the alterations being very considerable from what it was formerly, I hope that I shall have access to this scheme I send you, when I come to face up my new books. *So much for schemes.*—And that no scheme to betray a FRIEND, or mislead a STRANGER; to seduce a YOUNG GIRL, or rob a HEN-ROOST; to subvert LIBERTY, or bribe an EXCISEMAN; to disturb the GENERAL ASSEMBLY, or annoy a GOSSIPPING; to overthrow the credit of ORTHODOXY, or the authority of OLD SONGS; to oppose *your wishes*, or frustrate *my hopes*—MAY PROSPER—is the sincere wish and prayer of

ROBT. BURNS.

No.

No. LXVII.

TO THE EDITORS OF THE MORNING CHRONICLE.*

Dumfries.

GENTLEMEN,

You will see by your subscribers' list, that I have now been about nine months one of that number.

I am

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* This letter owes its origin to the following circum stance. A neighbour of the Poet's at Dumfries, called on him and complained that he was greatly disappointed in the irregular delivery of the Paper of *The Morning Chronicle.* Burns asked, "Why do not you write to the Editors of the Paper?" Good God, Sir, can *I* presume to write to the learned Editors of a Newspaper?—Well, if *you* are afraid of writing to the Editors of a Newspaper *I* am not; and if you think proper, I'll draw up a sketch of a letter, which you may copy.

Burns tore a leaf from his excise book and instantly produced the sketch which I have transcribed, and which is here printed. The poor man thanked him, and took the

letter

I am sorry to inform you, that in that time, seven or eight of your papers either have never been sent me, or else have never reached me. To be deprived of any one number of the first newspaper in Great Britain for information, ability and independance, is what I can ill brook and bear; but to be deprived of that most admirable oration of the Marquis of Lansdowne, when he made the great, though ineffectual attempt, (in the language of the poet, I fear too true,) "to save a SINKING STATE"—this was a loss which I neither can, nor will forgive you.—That paper, Gentlemen, never reached me; but I demand it of you. I am a BRITON; and must be interested in the cause of LIBERTY:—I am a MAN; and the RIGHTS of HUMAN NATURE cannot be indifferent to me. However, do not let me mislead you: I am not a man in that situation of life, which, as your subscriber, can be of any consequence to you, in the eyes of those to whom SITUA-

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letter home. However, that caution which the watchfulness of his enemies had taught him to exercise, prompted him to the prudence of begging a friend to wait on the person for whom it was written, and request the favor to have it returned. This request was complied with, and the paper never appeared in print. E.

SITUATION OF LIFE ALONE is the criterion of MAN.—I am but a plain tradesman, in this distant, obscure country town: but that humble domicile in which I shelter my wife and children, is the CASTELLUM of a BRITON; and that scanty, hard-earned income which supports them, is as truly my property, as the most magnificent fortune, of the most PUISSANT MEMBER of your HOUSE of NOBLES.

These, Gentlemen, are my sentiments; and to them I subscribe my name: and were I a man of ability and consequence enough to address the PUBLIC, with that name should they appear.

I am, &c.

No. LXVIII.

To COL. W. DUNBAR.

I AM not gone to Elysium, most noble Colonel, but am still here in this sublunary world, serving my God by propagating his image, and honoring my king by begetting him loyal subjects. Many happy returns of the season await my friend! May the thorns of care never beset his path! May peace be an inmate of his bosom, and rapture a frequent visitor of his soul! May the blood-hounds of misfortune never trace his steps, nor the screech-owl of sorrow alarm his dwelling! May enjoyment tell thy hours, and pleasure number thy days, thou friend of the Bard! Blessed be he that blesseth thee, and cursed be he that curseth thee!

No. LXIX.

To Mr. HERON, of Heron.

1794, or 1795.

SIR,

I inclose you some copies of a couple of political ballads; one of which, I believe, you have never seen. Would to Heaven I could make you master of as many votes in the Stewartry. But—

> "Who does the utmost that he can,
> "Does well, acts nobly, angels could no more."

In order to bring my humble efforts to bear with more effect on the foe, I have privately printed a good many copies of both ballads, and have sent them among friends all about the country.

To pillory on Parnassus the rank reprobation of character, the utter dereliction of all principle, in a profligate junto which has not only outraged virtue, but violated common decency;

ROYAL ...

cency; which, spurning even hypocrisy as paltry iniquity below their daring;—to unmask their flagitiousness to the broadest day—to deliver such over to their merited fate, is surely not merely innocent, but laudable; is not only propriety, but virtue.—You have already, as your auxiliary, the sober detestation of mankind on the heads of your opponents; and I swear by the lyre of Thalia to muster on your side all the votaries of honest laughter, and fair, candid ridicule!

I am extremely obliged to you for your kind mention of my interests in a letter which Mr. Syme shewed me. At present, my situation in life must be in a great measure stationary, at least for two or three years. The statement is this—I am on the supervisors' list, and as we come on there by precedency, in two or three years I shall be at the head of that list, and be appointed, *of course*. *Then*, a FRIEND might be of service to me in getting me into a place of the kingdom which I would like. A supervisor's income varies from about a hundred and twenty, to two hundred a year; but the business is an incessant drudgery, and would be nearly a compleat bar to every species of literary pursuit. The moment I am appointed supervisor, in the common routine, I may be nominated on the collector's list; and this is always a business purely of political patronage.

patronage. A collectorship varies much, from better than two hundred a year to near a thousand. They also come forward by precedency on the list; and have besides a handsome income, a life of compleat leisure. A life of literary leisure with a decent competence, is the summit of my wishes. It would be the prudish affectation of silly pride in me to say that I do not need, or would not be indebted to a political friend; at the same time, Sir, I by no means lay my affairs before you thus, to hook my dependant situation on your benevolence. If, in my progress of life, an opening should occur where the good offices of a gentleman of your public character and political consequence might bring me forward, I shall petition your goodness with the same frankness as I now do myself the honor to subscribe myself, &c.*

No.

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* Part of this letter appears in *Dr. Currie's ed.* vol. ii. p. 430.

No. LXX.

Address of the Scots Distillers, to the Right Hon. William Pitt.

SIR,

While pursy burgesses crowd your gate, sweating under the weight of heavy addresses, permit us, the quondam distillers in that part of Great Britain called Scotland, to approach you, not with venal approbation, but with fraternal condolence; not as what you are just now, or for some time have been; but as what, in all probability, you will shortly be.—We shall have the merit of not deserting our friends in the day of their calamity, and you will have the satisfaction of perusing at least one honest address. You are well acquainted with the dissection of human nature; nor do you need the assistance of a fellow-creature's bosom to inform you, that man is always a selfish, often a perfidious being.—This assertion, however the hasty conclusions of superficial observation may

doubt of it, or the raw inexperience of youth may deny it, those who make the fatal experiment we have done, will feel.—You are a statesman, and consequently are not ignorant of the traffic of these corporation compliments.—The little great man who drives the borough to market, and the very great man who buys the borough in that market, they two do the whole business; and you well know, they, likewise, have their price.—With that sullen disdain which you can so well assume, rise, illustrious Sir, and spurn these hireling efforts of venal stupidity. At best they are the compliments of a man's friends on the morning of his execution: They take a decent farewell; resign you to your fate; and hurry away from your approaching hour.

If fame say true, and omens be not very much mistaken, you are about to make your exit from that world where the sun of gladness gilds the paths of prosperous men: permit us, great Sir, with the sympathy of fellow-feeling to hail your passage to the realms of ruin.

Whether the sentiment proceed from the selfishness or cowardice of mankind is immaterial; but to point out to a child of misfortune those who are still more unhappy, is to give him some

degree

degree of positive enjoyment. In this light, Sir, our downfal may be again useful to you:—Though not exactly in the same way, it is not perhaps the first time it has gratified your feelings. It is true, the triumph of your evil star is exceedingly despiteful.—At an age when others are the votaries of pleasure, or underlings in business, you had attained the highest wish of a British Statesman; and with the ordinary date of human life, what a prospect was before you! Deeply rooted in *Royal Favor*, you overshadowed the land. The birds of passage, which follow ministerial sunshine through every clime of political faith and manners, flocked to your branches; and the beasts of the field, (the lordly possessors of hills and vallies,) crouded under your shade. "But behold a watcher, a holy one came down from heaven, and cried aloud, and said thus: Hew down the tree, and cut off his branches; shake off his leaves, and scatter his fruit; let the beasts get away from under it, and the fowls from his branches!" A blow from an unthought-of quarter, one of those terrible accidents which peculiarly mark the hand of Omnipotence, overset your career, and laid all your fancied honors in the dust. But turn your eyes, Sir, to the tragic scenes of our fate.—An ancient nation that for many ages had gallantly maintained the unequal struggle for independence with her much more powerful neighbour, at last agrees to a union

which

which should ever after make them one people. In consideration of certain circumstances, it was covenanted that the former should enjoy a stipulated alleviation in her share of the public burdens, particularly in that branch of the revenue called the Excise. This just privilege has of late given great umbrage to some interested, powerful individuals of the more potent part of the empire, and they have spared no wicked pains, under insidious pretexts, to subvert what they dared not openly to attack, from the dread which they yet entertained of the spirit of their antient enemies.

In this conspiracy we fell; nor did we alone suffer, our country was deeply wounded. A number of (we will say) respectable individuals, largely engaged in trade, where we were not only useful but absolutely necessary to our country in her dearest interests; we, with all that was near and dear to us, were sacrificed without remorse, to the infernal deity of political expediency! We fell to gratify the wishes of dark envy, and the views of unprincipled ambition! Your foes, Sir, were avowed; were too brave to take an ungenerous advantage; *you* fell in the face of day.—On the contrary, our enemies, to compleat our overthrow, contrived to make their guilt appear the villainy of a nation.—Your downfal only drags with you your private friends and partisans:

partisans: In our misery are more or less involved the most numerous, and most valuable part of the community—all those who immediately depend on the cultivation of the soil, from the landlord of a province, down to his lowest hind.

Allow us, Sir, yet farther, just to hint at another rich vein of comfort in the dreary regions of adversity;—the gratulations of an approving conscience. In a certain great assembly, of which you are a distinguished member, panegyrics on your private virtues have so often wounded your delicacy, that we shall not distress you with any thing on the subject. There is, however, one part of your public conduct which our feelings will not permit us to pass in silence; our gratitude must trespass on your modesty; we mean, worthy Sir, your whole behaviour to the Scots Distillers.—In evil hours, when obtrusive recollection presses bitterly on the sense, let that, Sir, come like a healing angel, and speak the peace to your soul which the world can neither give nor take away.

We have the honor to be,

Sir,

Your sympathizing fellow-sufferers,

And grateful humble Servants,

JOHN BARLEYCORN—Præses.

No.

No. LXXI.

To the Hon. the PROVOST, BAILIES, and TOWN COUNCIL of Dumfries.

Gentlemen,

The literary taste and liberal spirit of your good town has so ably filled the various departments of your schools, as to make it a very great object for a parent to have his children educated in them. Still, to me, a stranger, with my large family, and very stinted income, to give my young ones that education I wish, at the high school-fees which a stranger pays, will bear hard upon me.

Some years ago your good town did me the honor of making me an honorary Burgess.—Will you allow me to request that this mark of distinction may extend so far, as to put me on the footing of a real freeman of the town, in the schools?

* * * *

If

If you are so very kind as to grant my request,* it will certainly be a constant incentive to me to strain every nerve where I can officially serve you; and will, if possible, increase that grateful respect with which I have the honor to be,

Gentlemen,

Your devoted humble Servant.

No.

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* This request was immediately complied with.

I am happy to have an opportunity, of mentioning, with great respect, *Mr. James Gray.* At the time of the Poet's death this gentleman was Rector of the Grammar School of Dumfries, and is now one of the Masters of the High School of Edinburgh. He has uniformly exerted himself in the most benevolent manner, in the education and welfare of the Poet's sons. E.

No. LXXII.

To Mr. JAMES JOHNSON, Edinburgh.

Dumfries, July 4, 1796.

How are you, my dear friend, and how comes on your fifth volume? You may probably think that for some time past I have neglected you and your work; but, alas! the hand of pain, and sorrow, and care, has these many months lain heavy on me! Personal and domestic affliction have almost entirely banished that alacrity and life with which I used to woo the rural muse of Scotia.

* * * *

You are a good, worthy, honest fellow, and have a good right to live in this world—because you deserve it. Many a merry meeting this publication has given us, and possibly it may give us more, though, alas! I fear it. This protracting, slow, consuming illness which hangs over me, will, I doubt much, my ever dear friend, arrest my sun before he has well reached his middle career, and will turn over the Poet to far other

other and more important concerns than studying the brilliancy of wit, or the pathos of sentiment! However, *hope* is the cordial of the human heart, and I endeavour to cherish it as well as I can.

Let me hear from you as soon as convenient.—Your work is a great one; and now that it is near finished, I see, if we were to begin again, two or three things that might be mended; yet I will venture to prophecy, that to future ages your publication will be the text book and standard of Scottish song and music.

I am ashamed to ask another favor of you, because you have been so very good already; but my wife has a very particular friend of hers, a young lady who sings well, to whom she wishes to present the *Scots Musical Museum*.* If you

 have

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* In this humble and delicate manner did poor Burns ask for a copy of a work of which he was principally the founder, and to which he had contributed, *gratuitously*, not less than 184 *original, altered, and collected songs!* The Editor has seen 180 transcribed by his own hand, for the *Museum*.

This Letter was written on the 4th of July,—the Poet died on the 21st. No other letters of this interesting period

have a spare copy, will you be so obliging as to send it by the very first *Fly*, as I am anxious to have it soon.

Yours ever,

ROBERT BURNS.

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riod have been discovered, except one addressed to Mrs. Dunlop, of the 12th of July, which Dr. Currie very properly supposes to be the last production of the dying Bard. E.

STRICTURES

ON

SCOTTISH SONGS AND BALLADS,

ANCIENT AND MODERN;

WITH

ANECDOTES OF THEIR AUTHORS.

" There needs na' be so great a phrase
Wi' dringing dull Italian lays,
I wad na gi'e our ain Strathspeys
For half a hundred score o' em:
They're douff and dowie at the best,
Douff and dowie, douff and dowie;
They're douff and dowie at the best,
Wi' a' their variorum:
They're douff and dowie at the best,
Their Allegros, and a' the rest,
They cannot please a Scottish taste,
Compar'd wi' Tullochgorum."

Rev. John Skinner.

ADVERTISEMENT.

The chief part of the following Remarks on Scottish Songs and Ballads exist in the hand-writing of ROBERT BURNS, *in an interleaved Copy, in 4 Volumes, Octavo, of* "JOHNSON'S SCOTS MUSICAL MUSEUM." *They were written by the Poet for* CAPTAIN RIDDEL, *of* GLENRIDDEL, *whose Autograph the Volumes bear. These valuable Volumes were left by* MRS. RIDDEL, *to her Niece,* MISS ELIZA BAYLEY, *of* MANCHESTER, *by whose kindness the Editor is enabled to give to the Public transcripts of this amusing and miscellaneous Collection.*

ALPHABETICAL LIST OF THE SONGS INTRODUCED IN THE FOLLOWING REMARKS.

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" In the changes of language these Songs may no doubt suffer change; but the associated strain of Sentiment and of Music will perhaps survive, while the clear stream sweeps down the VALE OF YARROW, *or the yellow broom waves on the* COWDEN KNOWES."

DR. CURRIE.

STRICTURES, &c.

The Highland Queen.

THE Highland Queen, music and poetry, was composed by a Mr. M'Vicar, purser of the Solbay man of war.—This I had from Dr. Blacklock.

Bess the Gawkie.

THIS song shews that the Scottish Muses did not all leave us when we lost Ramsay and Oswald,* as I have good reason to believe that the verses

* Oswald was a music-seller in London, about the year 1750. He published a large collection of Scotish tunes, which he called the Caledonian Pocket Companion. Mr. Tytler observes, that his genius in composition, joined to his taste in the performance of Scotish music, was natural and pathetic. RITSON.

verses and music are both posterior to the days of these two gentlemen.—It is a beautiful song, and in the genuine Scots taste. We have few pastoral compositions, I mean the pastoral of nature, that are equal to this.

Oh, open the Door, Lord Gregory.

It is somewhat singular, that in Lanark, Renfrew, Ayr, Wigton, Kirkcudbright, and Dumfries-shires, there is scarcely an old song or tune which, from the title, &c, can be guessed to belong to, or be the production of these countries. This, I conjecture, is one of these very few; as the ballad, which is a long one, is called both by tradition and in printed collections, "The Lass o' Lochroyan," which I take to be Lochroyan, in Galloway.

The Banks of the Tweed.

This song is one of the many attempts that English composers have made to imitate the Scottish manner, and which I shall, in these strictures, beg leave to distinguish by the appellation of Anglo-Scottish productions. The music is pretty good, but the verses are just above contempt.

The

The Beds of sweet Roses.

THIS song, as far as I know, for the first time appears here in print—When I was a boy, it was a very popular song in Ayrshire. I remember to have heard those fanatics, the Buchanites,* sing some of their nonsensical rhymes, which they dignify with the name of hymns, to this air.†

Roslin Castle.

THESE beautiful verses were the production of a Richard Hewit,‡ a young man that Dr. Blacklock,

---

* A set of itinerant fanatics in the West of Scotland, so denominated from their leader, Mrs. Buchan.

† Shakspeare in his Winter's Tale, speaks of a *Puritan* who "*sings psalms to hornpipes.*"

‡ Richard Hewit, Ritson observes, was taken when a boy, during the residence of Dr. Blacklock in Cumberland, to lead him.—He addressed a copy of verses to the Doctor

lock, to whom I am indebted for the anecdote, kept for some years as an amanuensis. I do not know who is the author of the second song to the tune. Tytler, in his amusing history of Scots music, gives the air to Oswald; but in Oswald's own collection of Scots tunes, where he affixes an asterisk to those he himself composed, he does not make the least claim to the tune.

Saw ye Johnnie cummin? quo' she.

THIS song for genuine humor in the verses, and lively originality in the air, is unparalleled. I take it to be very old.

Clout

Doctor on quitting his service.—Among the verses are the following lines:

"How oft these plains I've thoughtless prest;
"Whistled or sung some Fair distrest,
"When fate would steal a tear."

"Alluding," as it said in a note, "to a sort of narrative songs, which make no inconsiderable part of the innocent amusements with which the country people pass the wintry nights, and of which the author of the present piece was a faithful rehearser."

Blacklock's Poems, 1756, 8vo. *p.* 5.

Clout the Caldron.

A TRADITION is mentioned in the *Bee*, that the second Bishop Chisholm, of Dunblane, used to say, that if he were going to be hanged, nothing would soothe his mind so much by the way, as to hear *Clout the Caldron* played.

I have met with another tradition, that the old song to this tune

"Hae ye ony pots or pans,
"Or onie broken chanlers,"

was composed on one of the Kenmure family, in the Cavalier times; and alluded to an amour he had, while under hiding, in the disguise of an itinerant tinker. The air is also known by the name of

"The Blacksmith and his Apron,"

which from the rhythm, seems to have been a line of some old song to the tune.

Saw

Saw ye my Peggy.

THIS charming song is much older, and indeed superior, to Ramsay's verses, "The Toast," as he calls them. There is another set of the words, much older still, and which I take to be the original one, but though it has a very great deal of merit it is not quite ladies' reading.

The original words, for they can scarcely be called verses, seem to be as follows; a song familiar from the cradle to every Scottish ear.

Saw ye my Maggie,
Saw ye my Maggie,
Saw ye my Maggie
Linkin o'er the lea?

High kilted was she,
High kilted was she,
High kilted was she,
Her coat aboon her knee.

What mark has your Maggie,
What mark has your Maggie,
What mark has your Maggie
That ane may ken her *be*? *(by)*

Though

Though it by no means follows that the silliest verses to an air must, for that reason, be the original song; yet I take this ballad, of which I have quoted part, to be the old verses. The two songs in Ramsay, one of them evidently his own, are never to be met with in the fire-side circle of our peasantry; while that which I take to be the old song, is in every shepherd's mouth. Ramsay, I suppose, had thought the old verses unworthy of a place in his collection.

The Flowers of Edinburgh.

THIS song is one of the many effusions of Scots jacobitism.—The title, "Flowers of Edinburgh," has no manner of connection with the present verses, so I suspect there has been an older set of words, of which the title is all that remains.

By the bye, it is singular enough that the Scottish Muses were all jacobites.—I have paid more attention to every description of Scots songs than perhaps any body living has done, and I do not recollect one single stanza, or even the title of the most trifling Scots air, which has the least panegyrical reference to the families of Nassau or Brunswick; while there are hundreds

satirizing them.—This may be thought no panegyric on the Scots Poets, but I mean it as such. For myself, I would always take it as a compliment to have it said, that my heart ran before my head.—and surely the gallant though unfortunate house of Stewart, the kings of our fathers for so many heroic ages, is a theme * * * * * * * * *

Jamie Gay.

JAMIE Gay is another and a tolerable Anglo-Scottish piece.

My dear Jockie.

Another Anglo-Scottish production.

Fye, gae rub her o'er wi' Strae.

IT is self-evident that the first four lines of this song are part of a song more ancient than Ramsay's beautiful verses which are annexed to them. As music is the language of nature; and poetry, particularly

particularly songs, are always less or more localized (if I may be allowed the verb) by some of the modifications of time and place, this is the reason why so many of our Scots airs have outlived their original, and perhaps many subsequent sets of verses; except a single name, or phrase, or sometimes one or two lines, simply to distinguish the tunes by.

To this day among people who know nothing of Ramsay's verses, the following is the song, and all the song that ever I heard:—

Gin ye meet a bonie lassie,
Gie her a kiss and let her gae;
But gin ye meet a dirty hizzie,
Fye, gae rub her o'er wi' strae.

Fye, gae rub her, rub her, rub her,
Fye gae rub her o'er wi' strae:
An' gin ye meet a dirty hizzie,
Fye, gae rub her o'er wi' strae.

The Lass o' Liviston.

THE old song, in three eight line stanzas, is well known, and has merit as to wit and humour; but it is rather unfit for insertion.—It begins,

The bonie lass o' Liviston,
Her name ye ken, her name ye ken,
And she has written in her contract,
To lie her lane, to lie her lane.
&c. &c.

The last Time I came o'er the Moor.

Ramsay found the first line of this song, which had been preserved as the title of the charming air, and then composed the rest of the verses to suit that line. This has always a finer effect than composing English words, or words with an idea foreign to the spirit of the old title. Where old titles of songs convey any idea at all, it will generally be found to be quite in the spirit of the air.

Jockie's

Jockie's Gray Breeks.

THOUGH this has certainly every evidence of being a Scottish air, yet there is a well-known tune and song in the North of Ireland, called, *The Weaver and his Shuttle O*, which though sung much quicker, is every note the very tune.

The Happy Marriage.

ANOTHER, but very pretty, Anglo-Scottish piece.

The Lass of Peaty's Mill.

IN Sinclair's Statistical Account of Scotland, this song is localized (a verb I must use for want of another to express my idea) somewhere in the north of Scotland, and likewise is claimed by Ayrshire.—The following anecdote I had from the present Sir William Cunningham of Robertland, who had it from the last John Earl of Loudon.

don.—The then Earl of Loudon and father to Earl John before mentioned, had Ramsay at Loûdon, and one day walking together by the banks of Irvine water, near New-Mills, at a place yet called Peaty's Mill, they were struck with the appearance of a beautiful country girl. His lordship observed that she would be a fine theme for a song.—Allan lagged behind in returning to Loudon Castle, and at dinner produced this identical song.*

The Turnimspike.

THERE is a stanza of this excellent song for local humour, omitted in this set,—where I have placed the asterisms.†

They tak the horse then by te head,
And tere tey mak her stan', man;
Me tell tem, me hae seen te day,
Tey no had sic comman', man.

Highland

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* This anecdote is somewhat differently told in Dr. Currie's ed. vol. iv. No. 19.

† Burns has placed the asterisms between the 9th and 10th verses.

Highland Laddie.

As this was a favorite theme with our later Scottish muses, there are several airs and songs of that name. That which I take to be the oldest, is to be found in the *Musical Museum*, beginning, "I hae been at Crookie-den."—One reason for my thinking so is, that Oswald has it in his collection by the name of, "The auld Highland laddie."—It is also known by the name of, "Jinglan Johnie," which is a well-known song of four or five stanzas, and seems to be an earlier song than Jacobite times.—As a proof of this, it is little known to the peasantry by the name of "Highland Laddie;" while every body knows "Jinglan Johnie." The song begins

Jinglan John, the meickle man
He met wi' a lass was blythe and bonie.

Another *Highland Laddie* is also in the Museum, vol. v. which I take to be Ramsay's original, as he has borrowed the chorus—"O my bonie Highland lad, &c." It consists of three stanzas, besides the chorus; and has humor in its

its composition—it is an excellent but somewhat licentious song.—It begins

As I cam o'er Cairney-Mount,
And down amang the blooming heather, &c.

This air, and the common Highland Laddie, seem only to be different sets.

Another Highland Laddie, also in the Museum, vol. v. is the tune of several Jacobite fragments.—One of these old songs to it, only exists, as far as I know, in these four lines—

Whare hae ye been a' day,
Bonie laddie, Highland laddie?
Down the back o' Bell's brae,
Courtin Maggie, courtin Maggie.

Another of this name is Dr. Arne's beautiful air, called, the new Highland Laddie.*

The

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* The following observation was found in a memorandum book belonging to the poet.

The Highlanders' Prayer, at Sheriff-Muir.

"O L—d be thou with us; but, if thou be *not* with us, be not against us; *but leave it between the red coats and us!*"

The Gentle Swain.

To sing such a beautiful air to such execrable verses, is downright * * * of common sense! The Scots verses indeed are tolerable.

He stole my tender Heart away.

This is an Anglo-Scottish production, but by no means a bad one.

Fairest of the Fair.

It is too barefaced to take Dr. Percy's charming song, and by the means of transposing a few English words into Scots, to offer to pass it for a Scots song.—I was not acquainted with the Editor until the first volume was nearly finished, else, had I known in time, I would have prevented such an impudent absurdity.

---

*The Blaithrie o't.**

THE following is a set of this song, which was the earliest song I remember to have got by heart. When a child, an old woman sung it to me, and I picked it up, every word, at first hearing.

O Willy weel I mind, I lent you my hand
To sing you a song which you did me command;
But my memory's so bad, I had almost forgot
That you called it the gear and the blaithrie o't.—

I'll not sing about confusion, delusion, or pride,
I'll sing about a laddie was for a virtuous bride;
For virtue is an ornament that time will never rot,
And preferable to gear and the blathrie o't.—

Tho' my lassie hae nae scarlets or silks to put on,
We envy not the greatest that sits upon the throne;
I wad rather hae my lassie, tho' she cam in her smock,
Than a princess wi' the gear and the blathrie o't.—

Tho'

---

* "*Shame fall the geer and the blad'ry o't,*" is the turn of an old Scottish song, spoken when a young handsome girl marries an old man, upon the account of his wealth.

Kelly's Scots Proverbs, p. 296.

Tho' we hae nae horses or minzie* at command,
We will toil on our foot, and we'll work wi' our hand;
And when wearied without rest, we'll find it sweet in any spot,
And we'll value not the gear and the blathrie o't.—

If we hae ony babies, we'll count them as lent;
Hae we less, hae we mair, we will ay be content;
For they say they hae mair pleasure that wins but a groat,
Than the miser wi' his gear and the blathrie o't.—

I'll not meddle wi' th' affairs o' the kirk or the queen;
They're nae matters for a sang, let them sink let them swim,
On your kirk I'll near encroach, but I'll hold it still remote,
Sae tak this for the gear and the blathrie o't.

May

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* *Minzie*—retinue—followers.

May Eve, or Kate of Aberdeen.

KATE of Aberdeen, is, I believe, the work of poor Cunningham the player; of whom the following anecdote, though told before, deserves a recital. A fat dignitary of the church coming past Cunningham one *Sunday* as the poor poet was busy plying a fishing-rod in some stream near Durham, his native country,* his reverence reprimanded Cunningham very severely for such an occupation on such a day. The poor poet, with that inoffensive gentleness of manners which was his peculiar characteristic, replied, that he hoped God and his reverence would forgive his seeming profanity of that sacred day, "*as he had no dinner to eat, but what lay at the bottom of that pool!*" This, Mr. Woods, the player, who knew Cunningham well, and esteemed him much, assured me was true.

Tweed-

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* Cunningham was a native of Ireland.—See *Dr. Anderson's Life of Cunningham, British Poets*, vol. x.

Tweed-Side.

In Ramsay's Tea-table Miscellany, he tells us that about thirty of the songs in that publication were the works of some young gentlemen of his acquaintance; which songs are marked with the letters D. C. &c.—Old Mr. Tytler, of Woodhouselee, the worthy and able defender of the beauteous queen of Scots, told me that the songs marked C, in the *Tea-table*, were the composition of a Mr. Crawford, of the house of Achnames, who was afterwards unfortunately drowned coming from France.—As Tytler was most intimately acquainted with Allan Ramsay, I think the anecdote may be depended on. Of consequence, the beautiful song of Tweed-Side, is Mr. Crawford's, and indeed does great honor to his poetical talents. He was a Robert Crawford; the Mary he celebrates, was a Mary Stewart, of the Castle-Milk family,* afterwards married to a Mr. John Ritchie.

I have

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* If the reader refers to the note in page 221, he will there find that *Mr. Walter Scott* states this song to have been written in honour of another lady, a *Miss Mary Lilias Scott.*

I have seen a song, calling itself the original Tweed-Side, and said to have been composed by a Lord Yester. It consisted of two stanzas, of which I still recollect the first.—

When Maggy and I was acquaint,
I carried my noddle fu' hie;
Nae lintwhite on a' the green plain,
Nor gowdspink sae happy as me:
But I saw her sae fair, and I lo'ed;
I woo'd, but I came nae great speed;
So now I maun wander abroad,
And lay my banes far frae the Tweed.—

The Posie.

It appears evident to me that Oswald composed his *Roslin Castle* on the modulation of this air.—In the second part of Oswald's, in the three first bars, he has either hit on a wonderful similarity to, or else he has entirely borrowed the three first bars of the old air; and the close of both tunes is almost exactly the same. The old verses to which it was sung, when I took down

down the notes from a country girl's voice had no great merit.—The following is a specimen:

There was a pretty may* and a milkin she went;
Wi' her red rosy cheeks, and her coal-black hair:
And she has met a young man a comin o'er the bent,
With a double and adieu to thee fair may.

O where are ye goin, my ain pretty may,
Wi' thy red rosy cheeks, and thy coal-black hair?
Unto the yowes a milkin, kind sir, she says,
With a double and adieu to thee fair may.

What if I gang alang wi' thee, my ain pretty may,
Wi' thy red rosy cheeks, and thy coal-black hair;
Wad I be aught the warse o' that, kind sir, she says,
With a double and adieu to thee fair may.
&c. &c.

Mary's

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* *May*—Maid—Young Woman.

*Mary's Dream.**

THE Mary here alluded to is generally supposed to be Miss Mary Macghie, daughter to the Laird of Airds, in Galloway. The Poet was a Mr. Alexander Lowe, who likewise wrote another beautiful song, called Pompey's Ghost.—I have seen a poetic epistle from him in North America, where he now is, or lately was, to a lady in Scotland.—By the strain of the verses, it appeared that they allude to some love disappointment.

The

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* This is the pathetic song beginning—

"The moon had climb'd the highest hill,
Which rises o'er the source of Dee,
And from the eastern summit shed
Her silver light on tow'r and tree:
When Mary laid her down to sleep,
Her thoughts on Sandy far at sea;
When soft and low a voice was heard,
Saying, Mary weep no more for me."

The Maid that tends the Goats.

BY MR. DUDGEON.

THIS Dudgeon is a respectable farmer's son in Berwickshire.

I wish my Love were in a Mire.

I NEVER heard more of the words of this old song than the title.

Allan Water.

THIS Allan Water, which the composer of the music has honored with the name of the air, I have been told is Allan Water, in Strathallan.

There's nae Luck about the House.

THIS is one of the most beautiful songs in the Scots, or any other language.—The two lines,

" And will I see his face again!
" And will I hear him speak!"

as well as the two preceding ones, are unequalled almost by any thing I ever heard or read: and the lines,

"The present moment is our ain,
"The neist we never saw"—

are worthy of the first poet.—It is long posterior to Ramsay's days.—About the year 1771, or 72, it came first on the streets as a ballad; and I suppose the composition of the song was not much anterior to that period.

Tarry Woo.

THIS is a very pretty song; but I fancy that the first half stanza, as well as the tune itself, are much older than the rest of the words.

Gramachree.

THE song of *Gramachree* was composed by a Mr. Poe, a counsellor at law in Dublin. This anecdote I had from a gentleman who knew the lady,

lady, the "Molly," who is the subject of the song, and to whom Mr. Poe sent the first manuscript of his most beautiful verses. I do not remember any single line that has more true pathos than—

"How can she break that honest heart that wears
her in its core!"

But as the song is Irish, it had nothing to do in this collection.

The Collier's Bonie Lassie.

THE first half stanza is much older than the days of Ramsay.—The old words began thus:

The collier has a dochter, and, O, she's wonder bonie!
A laird he was that sought her, rich baith in lands and money.
She wad na hae a laird, nor wad she be a lady;
But she wad hae a collier, the color o' her daddie.—

My ain kind Dearie—O.

THE old words of this song are omitted here, though much more beautiful than these inserted; which were mostly composed by poor Fergusson, in one of his merry humors.—The old words began thus:

I'll rowe thee o'er the lea-rig,
My ain kind dearie, O,
I'll rowe thee o'er the lea-rig,
My ain kind dearie, O,
Altho' the night were ne'er sae wat,
And I were ne'er sae weary, O,
I'll rowe thee o'er the lea-rig,
My ain kind dearie, O.—

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*Mary Scott, the Flower of Yarrow.**

MR. Robertson in his statistical account of the parish of Selkirk, says, that Mary Scott, the Flower of Yarrow, was descended from the Dry-hope,

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* A very interesting account of "The Flower of Yarrow" appears in a note to Mr. Walter Scott's "*Marmion.*" The Editor

hope, and married into the Harden family. Her daughter was married to a predecessor of the present Sir Francis Elliot of Stobbs, and of the late Lord Heathfield.

There is a circumstance in their contract of marriage that merits attention, as it strongly marks the predatory spirit of the times.—The father-in-law agrees to keep his daughter, for some

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Editor has so often experienced that gentleman's obliging disposition, that he presumes on his pardon for transcribing it.

" Near the lower extremity of Saint Mary's Lake, (a beautiful sheet of water, forming the reservoir from which the Yarrow takes its source,) are the ruins of Dryhope tower, the birth-place of Mary Scott, daughter of Philip Scott of Dryhope, and famous by the traditional name of the Flower of Yarrow. She was married to Walter Scott of Harden, no less renowned for his depredations, than his bride for her beauty. Her romantic appellation was, in latter days, with equal justice, conferred on Miss Mary Lilias Scott, the last of the elder branch of the Harden family." Mr. Scott proceeds to relate that " he well remembers the talent and spirit of the latter Flower of Yarrow, though age had then injured the charms which procured her the name; and that the words usually sung to the air of " Tweed-side," beginning, ' What beauties does Flora disclose,' were composed in her honour."

Notes to CANTO II. p. 33

some time after the marriage; for which the son-in-law binds himself to give him the profits of the first Michaelmas-moon!*

Down the Burn, Davie.

I HAVE been informed, that the tune of "Down the Burn, Davie," was the composition of David Maigh, keeper of the blood slough hounds, belonging to the Laird of Riddel, in Tweeddale.

Blink o'er the Burn, sweet Bettie.

THE old words, all that I remember are,—

Blink over the burn sweet Betty,
It is a cauld winter night;
It rains, it hails, it thunders,
The moon she gies nae light:
It's a' for the sake o' sweet Betty,
That ever I tint my way;
Sweet, let me lie beyond thee
Until it be break o' day.—

O, Betty

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* The time when the moss-troopers and cattle-drivers on the borders, begin their nightly depredations.

O, Betty will bake my bread,
And Betty will brew my ale,
And Betty will be my love,
When I come over the dale:
Blink over the burn, sweet Betty,
Blink over the burn to me,
And while I hae life, dear lassie,
My ain sweet Betty thou's be.—

The Blithsome Bridal.

I FIND the Blithsome Bridal, in James Watson's collection of Scots poems, printed at Edinburgh, in 1706. This collection, the publisher says, is the first of its nature which has been published in our own native Scots dialect—it is now extremely scarce.

John Hay's Bonie Lassie.

JOHN Hay's Bonie Lassie was daughter of John Hay, Earl or Marquis of Tweeddale, and late Countess Dowager of Roxburgh.—She died at Broomlands, near Kelso, some time between the years 1720 and 1740.

The Bonie Brucket Lassie.

THE two first lines of this song are all of it that is old. The rest of the song, as well as those songs in the *Museum* marked T, are the works of an obscure, tippling, but extraordinary body of the name of Tytler, commonly known by the name of Balloon Tytler, from his having projected a balloon: A mortal, who though he drudges about Edinburgh as a common printer, with leaky shoes, a sky-lighted hat, and knee-buckles as unlike as George-by-the-grace-of-God, and Solomon-the-Son-of-David; yet that same unknown drunken mortal is author and compiler of three-fourths of Elliot's pompous Encyclopedia Britannica, which he composed at half a guinea a week !*

Sae merry as we twa ha'e been.

This song is beautiful.—The chorus in particular

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* A short sketch of this eccentric character may be seen at the end of these Remarks on Scottish Songs.

cular is truly pathetic. I never could learn any thing of its author.

Chorus.

Sae merry as we twa ha'e been,
Sae merry as we twa ha'e been;
My heart it is like for to break,
When I think on the days we ha'e seen

The Banks of Forth.

This air is Oswald's.

The Bush aboon Traquair.

This is another beautiful song of Mr. Crawford's composition. In the neighbourhood of Traquair, tradition still shews the old "Bush;" which, when I saw it in the year 1787, was composed of eight or nine ragged birches. The Earl of Traquair has planted a clump of trees near by, which he calls "The new Bush."

Cromlet's Lilt.

The following interesting account of this plaintive dirge was communicated to Mr. Riddel by Alexander Frazer Tytler, Esq. of Woodhouselee.

"In the latter end of the 16th century, the Chisolms were proprietors of the estate of Cromlecks (now possessed by the Drummonds.) The eldest son of that family was very much attached to a daughter of Sterling of Ardoch, commonly known by the name of Fair Helen of Ardoch.—

"At that time the opportunities of meeting betwixt the sexes were more rare, consequently more sought after than now; and the Scottish ladies, far from priding themselves on extensive literature, were thought sufficiently book-learned if they could make out the Scriptures in their mother tongue. Writing was entirely out of the line of female education: At that period the most of our young men of family sought a fortune, or found a grave, in France. Cromlus, when he went abroad to the war, was obliged to leave the management of his correspondence with his mistress to a lay brother of the monastry

try of Dumblain, in the immediate neighbourhood of Cromleck, and near Ardoch. This man, unfortunately, was deeply sensible of Helen's charms. He artfully prepossessed her with stories to the disadvantage of Cromlus; and by misinterpreting or keeping up the letters and messages intrusted to his care, he entirely irritated both. All connection was broken off betwixt them: Helen was inconsolable, and Cromlus has left behind him, in the ballad called Cromlet's Lilt, a proof of the elegance of his genius, as well as the steadiness of his love.

"When the artful monk thought time had sufficiently softened Helen's sorrow, he proposed himself as a lover: Helen was obdurate: but at last, overcome by the persuasions of her brother with whom she lived, and who, having a family of thirty-one children, was probably very well pleased to get her off his hands.—She submitted, rather than consented to the ceremony; but there her compliance ended; and, when forcibly put into bed, she started quite frantic from it, screaming out that after three gentle taps on the wainscot, at the bed head, she heard Cromlus's voice, crying *Helen, Helen, mind me.* Cromlus soon after coming home, the treachery of the confident was discovered,—her marriage disannulled,

disannulled,—and Helen became lady Cromlecks."

N. B. Marg. Murray, mother to these thirty-one children, was daughter to Murray of Strewn, one of the seventeen sons of Tullybardine, and whose youngest son, commonly called the Tutor of Ardoch, died in the year 1715, aged 111 years.

My Dearie, if thou die.

Another beautiful song of Crawford's.

She rose and let me in.

The old set of this song, which is still to be found in printed collections, is much prettier than this; but somebody, I believe it was Ramsay, took it into his head to clear it of some seeming indelicacies, and made it at once more chaste and more dull.

Go to the Ewe-bughts, Marion.*

I am not sure if this old and charming air be of the South, as is commonly said, or of the North of Scotland.—There is a song apparently as antient as, " Ewe-bughts Marion," which sings to the same tune, and is evidently of the North.—It begins thus :

The Lord o'Gordon had three dochters,
Mary, Marget, and Jean,
They wad na stay at bonie Castle Gordon,
But awa to Aberdeen.

Lewis Gordon.†

This air is a proof how one of our Scots tunes comes to be composed out of another. I have

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* Sheep-folds.

† The supposed author of Lewis Gordon was a Mr. Geddes, priest, at Shenval, in the Ainzie. R. B.

have one of the earliest copies of the song, and it has prefixed,

"Tune of Tarry Woo"—

Of which tune, a different set has insensibly varied into a different air.—To a Scots critic, the pathos of the line,

"Tho' his back be at the wa,"

—must be very striking.—It needs not a Jacobite prejudice to be affected with this song.

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*Oh ono Chrio.**

Dr. Blacklock informed me that this song was composed on the infamous massacre of Glencoe.

I'll never leave thee.

This is another of Crawford's songs, but I do not think in his happiest manner.—What an absurdity, to join such names, as *Adonis* and *Mary* together.

Corn

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* A corruption of *O hone a rie'* signifying—"Alas for the prince, or chief."

Corn Rigs are bonie.

All the old words that ever I could meet to this air were the following, which seem to have been an old chorus.

O corn rigs and rye rigs,
O corn rigs are bonie;
And where'er you meet a bonie lass,
Preen up her cockernony

The mucking of Geordie's Byar.

The chorus of this song is old; the rest is the work of Balloon Tytler.

Bide ye yet.

There is a beautiful song to this tune beginning,

"Alas, my son, you little know"—

which is the composition of a Miss Jenny Graham of Dumfries.

Waukin

Waukin o' the Fauld.

THERE are two stanzas still sung to this tune, which I take to be the original song whence Ramsay composed his beautiful song of that name in the Gentle Shepherd.—It begins

O will ye speak at our town,
As ye come frae the fauld, &c.

I regret that, as in many of our old songs, the delicacy of this old fragment is not equal to its wit and humor.

Tranent-Muir.

"TRANENT-MUIR," was composed by a Mr. Skirvan, a very worthy respectable farmer near Haddington. I have heard the anecdote often, that Lieut. Smith, whom he mentions in the ninth

ninth stanza,* came to Haddington after the publication of the song, and sent a challenge to Skirvan to meet him at Haddington, and answer for the unworthy manner in which he had noticed him in his song.—"Gang awa back," said the honest farmer, "and tell Mr. Smith that I hae na leisure to come to Haddington; but tell him to come here; and I'll tak a look o' him, and if I think I'm fit to fecht him, I'll fecht him; and if no—I'll do as he did—*I'll rin awa.*"—

To the Weavers gin ye go.

THE Chorus of this song is old, the rest of it is mine.—Here, once for all, let me apologize for

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Stanza 9.

* "And Major Bowle, that worthy soul,
Was brought down to the ground, man;
His horse being shot, it was his lot
For to get mony a wound man:
Lieutenant Smith, of Irish birth,
Frae whom he call'd for aid, man,
Being full of dread, lap o'er his head,
And wadna be gainsaid, man!"

for many silly compositions of mine in this work. Many beautiful airs wanted words; in the hurry of other avocations, if I could string a parcel of rhymes together any thing near tolerable, I was fain to let them pass. He must be an excellent poet indeed, whose every performance is excellent.

Polwarth on the Green.

THE author of "Polwarth on the Green," is Capt. John Drummond M'Grigor, of the family of Bochaldie.

Strephon and Lydia.

THE following account of this song I had from Dr. Blacklock.

The Strephon and Lydia mentioned in the song were perhaps the loveliest couple of their time. The gentleman was commonly known by the name of Beau Gibson. The lady was the "Gentle Jean," celebrated somewhere in Mr. Hamilton

ton of Bangour's poems.—having frequently met at public places, they had formed a reciprocal attachment, which their friends thought dangerous, as their resources were by no means adequate to their tastes and habits of life. To elude the bad consequences of such a connexion, Strephon was sent abroad with a commission, and perished in Admiral Vernon's expedition to Carthagena.

The author of the song was William Wallace, Esq. of Cairnhill, in Ayrshire.

I'm o'er young to marry yet.

THE chorus of this song is old.—The rest of it, such as it is, is mine.

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*M'Pherson's Farewel.**

M'PHERSON, a daring robber, in the beginning of this century, was condemned to be

 hanged

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* The words are Burns's—they will be found among the poems in this volume.

hanged at the assizes at Inverness. He is said, when under sentence of death, to have composed this tune, which he called his own lament, or farewel.

Gow has published a variation of this fine tune as his own composition, which he calls, "The Princess Augusta."

My Jo, Janet.

JOHNSON, the publisher, with a foolish delicacy, refused to insert the last stanza of this humorous ballad.

* * * *

The Shepherd's Complaint.

THE words by a Mr. R. Scott, from the town or neighbourhood of Biggar.

The

The Birks of Aberfeldy.

I COMPOSED these stanzas standing under the falls of Aberfeldy, at, or near, Moness.

The Highland Lassie, O.

THIS was a composition of mine in very early life, before I was known at all in the world. My Highland lassie was a warm-hearted, charming young creature as ever blessed a man with generous love. After a pretty long tract of the most ardent reciprocal attachment, we met by appointment, on the second Sunday of May, in a sequestered spot by the Banks of Ayr, where we spent the day in taking a farewel, before she should embark for the West-Highlands, to arrange matters among her friends for our projected change of life. At the close of Autumn following she crossed the sea to meet me at Greenock, where she had scarce landed when she was seized with a malignant fever, which hurried my dear

dear girl to the grave in a few days, before I could even hear of her illness.*

Fife

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* There are events in this transitory scene of existence, seasons of joy or of sorrow, of despair or of hope, which as they powerfully affect us at the time, serve as epochs to the history of our lives. They may be termed the trials of the heart.—We treasure them deeply in our memory, and as time glides silently away they help us to number our days. Of this character was the parting of *Burns* with his *Highland Mary*, that interesting female, the first object of the youthful Poet's love. This adieu was performed with all those simple and striking ceremonials which rustic sentiment has devised to prolong tender emotions and to inspire awe. The lovers stood on each side of a small purling brook; they laved their hands in its limpid stream, and holding a bible between them, pronounced their vows to be faithful to each other. They parted—never to meet again!

The anniversary of *Mary Campbell's* death, (for that was her name,) awakening in the sensitive mind of *Burns* the most lively emotion, he retired from his family, then residing on the farm of Ellisland, and wandered, solitary, on the banks of the Nith, and about the farm-yard, in the extremest agitation of mind, nearly the whole of the night: His agitation was so great that he threw himself on the side of a corn stack, and there conceived his sublime and tender elegy—his address *To Mary in Heaven.*

E.

Fife, and a' the Lands about it.

THIS song is Dr. Blacklock's. He, as well as I, often gave Johnson verses, trifling enough perhaps, but they served as a vehicle to the music.

Were na my Heart light I wad die.

LORD Hailes, in the notes to his collection of ancient Scots poems, says that this song was the composition of a Lady Grissel Baillie, daughter of the first Earl of Marchmont, and wife of George Baillie, of Jerviswood.

The Young Man's Dream.

THIS song is the composition of Balloon Tytler.

Strathallan's Lament

THIS air is the composition of one of the worthiest and best hearted men living—Allan Masterton,

Masterton, Schoolmaster in Edinburgh. As he and I were both sprouts of jacobitism, we agreed to dedicate the words and air to that cause.

To tell the matter of fact, except when my passions were heated by some accidental cause, my jacobitism was merely by way of, *vive la bagatelle.*

Up in the Morning early.

The chorus of this is old; the two stanzas are mine.

Up in the morning's no for me,
Up in the morning early;
When a' the hills are cover'd wi' snaw,
I'm sure it's winter fairly.

Cold blaws the wind frae east to west,
The drift is driving sairly;
Sae loud and shrill's I hear the blast,
I'm sure it's winter fairly.

The

The birds sit chittering in the thorn,
A' day they fare but sparely;
And lang's the night frae e'en to morn,
I'm sure it's winter fairly.

Up in the morning, &c.

The Tears of Scotland.

Dr. Blacklock told me that Smollett, who was at bottom a great jacobite, composed these beautiful and pathetic verses on the infamous depredations of the Duke of Cumberland after the battle of Culloden.

What will I do gin my Hoggie die.

Dr. Walker, who was Minister at Moffat in 1772, and is now (1791) Professor of Natural History, in the University of Edinburgh; told the following anecdote concerning this air.—He said that some gentlemen riding a few years ago, through Liddesdale, stopped at a hamlet consisting of a few houses, called Moss Platt; when they

they were struck with this tune, which an old woman, spinning on a rock at her door, was singing. —All she could tell concerning it was, that she was taught it when a child, and it was called, "What will I do gin my Hoggie die." No person, except a few females at Moss Platt, knew this fine old tune; which, in all probability, would have been lost, had not one of the gentlemen who happened to have a flute with him, taken it down.

I dream'd I lay where Flowers were springing.

THESE two stanzas I composed when I was seventeen, and are among the oldest of my printed pieces.

I dream'd I lay where flowers were springing,
Gaily in the sunny beam;
List'ning to the wild birds singing,
By a falling, chrystal stream:
Straight the sky grew black and daring;
Thro' the woods the whirlwinds rave;
Trees with aged arms were warring,
O'er the swelling, drumlie wave.

Such

Such was my life's deceitful morning,
Such the pleasures I enjoy'd;
But lang or noon, loud tempests storming
A' my flow'ry bliss destroy'd.
Tho' fickle fortune has deceiv'd me,
She promis'd fair, and perform'd but ill;
Of mony a joy and hope bereav'd me,
I bear a heart shall support me still.

Ah! the poor Shepherd's mournful Fate.

Tune Gallashiels.

THE old title, "Sour Plums o' Gallashiels," probably was the beginning of a song to this air, which is now lost.

The tune of Gallashiels was composed about the beginning of the present century by the Laird of Gallashiel's piper.

The Banks of the Devon.

These verses were composed on a charming girl, a Miss Charlotte Hamilton, who is now married to James M'Kitrick Adair, Esq. physician. She is sister to my worthy friend, Gavin

Gavin Hamilton, of Mauchline; and was born on the banks of Ayr, but was, at the time I wrote these lines, residing at Herveyston, in Clackmannanshire, on the romantic banks of the little river Devon.—I first heard the air from a lady in Inverness, and got the notes taken down for this work.

Mill, Mill O.—

The original, or at least a song evidently prior to Ramsay's, is still extant—It runs thus,

Chorus.

The mill, mill O, and the kill, kill O,
And the coggin o' Peggy's wheel O,
The sack and the sieve, and a' she did leave,
And danc'd the miller's reel O.—

As I cam down yon waterside,
And by yon shellin-hill O,
There I spied a bonie bonie lass,
And a lass that I lov'd right weel O.—*

* * * *

We

* The remaining two stanzas, though pretty enough, partake rather too much of the rude simplicity of the "Olden time" to be admitted here.

We ran and they ran.

The author of "We ran and they ran"—was a Rev. Mr. Murdoch M'Lennan, minister at Crathie, Dee-side.

Waly, Waly.

In the west country I have heard a different edition of the 2d stanza.—Instead of the four lines, beginning with, "When cockle-shells, &c." the other way ran thus:—

O wherefore need I busk my head,
Or wherefore need I kame my hair,
Sin my fause luve has me forsook,
And says, he'll never luve me mair.—

Duncan

Duncan Grey.

Dr. Blacklock informed me that he had often heard the tradition that this air was composed by a carman in Glasgow.

Dumbarton Drums.

This is the last of the West Highland airs; and from it, over the whole tract of country to the confines of Tweed-side, there is hardly a tune or song that one can say has taken its origin from any place or transaction in that part of Scotland.—The oldest Ayrshire reel, is Stewarton Lasses, which was made by the father of the present Sir Walter Montgomery Cunningham, alias Lord Lysle; since which period there has indeed been local music in that country in great plenty.—Johnie Faa is the only old song which I could ever trace as belonging to the extensive county of Ayr.

Cauld Kail in Aberdeen.

THIS song is by the duke of Gordon.—The old verses are,

There's cauld Kail* in Aberdeen,
And Castocks† in Strathbogie;
When ilka lad maun hae his lass,
Then fye, gie me my coggie.‡

CHORUS.

My coggie, Sirs, my coggie, Sirs,
I cannot want my coggie:
I wadna gie my three-girr'd cap
For e'er a quene on Bogie.—

There's Johnie Smith has got a wife
That scrimps him o' his coggie,
If she were mine, upon my life
I wad douk her in a bogie.—
My coggie, Sirs, &c.

For

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* *Kail*, coleworts, a plant much used in Scotland for pottage.

† *Castocks*, cabbage stalks.

‡ *Cog*, of which coggie is the diminutive, (according to Ramsay,) is a pretty large wooden dish, the country people put their pottage in. It is also a drinking vessel of the same materials, differing from the *bicker* in having no handle.

For lake of Gold.

THE country girls in Ayrshire, instead of the line—

She me forsook for a great duke,

say,

For Athole's duke she me forsook ;

which I take to be the original reading.

These words were composed by the late Dr. Austin, physician at Edinburgh.—He had courted a lady, to whom he was shortly to have been married; but the Duke of Athole having seen her, became so much in love with her, that he made proposals of marriage, which were accepted of, and she jilted the doctor.

Here's a Health to my true Love, &c.

THIS song is Dr. Blacklock's.—He told me that tradition gives the air to our James IV. of Scotland.

Hey

Hey tutti tait.

I HAVE met the tradition universally over Scotland, and particularly about Stirling, in the neighbourhood of the scene, that this air was *Robert Bruce*'s march at the battle of *Bannockburn.**

Raving

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* It does not seem at all probable that the Scots had any martial music in the time of this monarch; it being their custom, at that period, for every man in the host to bear a little horn, with the blowing of which, as we are told by Froissart, they would make such a horrible noise as if all the devils of hell had been among them. It is not therefore, likely, that these unpolished warriors would be curious

——— "to move
"In perfect phalanx to the Dorian mood
"Of flutes and self recorders."

These horns, indeed, are the only music ever mentioned by Barbour, to whom any particular march would have been too important a circumstance to be passed over in silence; so that it must remain a moot point, whether Bruce's army were cheared by the sound of even a solitary bagpipe.

See *Ritson's Hist. Essay on Scottish Song.*

Raving Winds around her blowing.

I COMPOSED these verses on Miss Isabella M'Leod of Raza, alluding to her feelings on the death of her sister, and the still more melancholy death of her sister's husband, the late Earl of Loudon; who shot himself out of sheer heart-break at some mortifications he suffered, owing to the deranged state of his finances.

Tak your auld Cloak about ye.

A PART of this old song according to the English set of it, is quoted in Shakspeare.*

Ye

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* In the drinking scene in Othello—Iago sings:

" King Stephen was a worthy peer,
His breeches cost him but a crown;
He held them sixpence all too dear,
With that he called the tailor lown;
He was a wight of high renown,
And thou art but of low degree:
'Tis pride that pulls the country down,
Then take thine auld cloak about thee."

The old song from which these stanzas are taken, was recovered by Dr. Percy, and preserved by him in his *Reliques of Antient Poetry.* E.

Ye Gods, was Strephon's Picture blest?

Tune, Fourteenth of October.

THE title of this air shews that it alludes to the famous king Crispian, the patron of the honorable corporation of Shoemakers.—St. Crispian's day falls on the fourteenth of October, old style, as the old proverb tells;

"On the fourteenth of October
"Was ne'er a sutor * sober."

Since robb'd of all that charm'd my Views.

THE old name of this air is, "The blossom o' the Raspberry." The song is Dr. Blacklock's.

Young Damon.

THIS air is by Oswald.

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* *Sutor*—a Shoemaker.

Kirk wad let me be.

TRADITION in the western parts of Scotland tells, that this old song, of which there are still three stanzas extant, once saved a covenanting clergyman out of a scrape. It was a little prior to the revolution, a period when being a Scots covenanter was being a felon, that one of their clergy who was at that very time hunted by the merciless soldiery, fell in, by accident, with a party of the military. The soldiers were not exactly acquainted with the person of the reverend gentleman of whom they were in search; but, from some suspicious circumstances, they fancied that they had got one of that cloth and opprobrious persuasion among them in the person of this stranger. "Mass John," to extricate himself, assumed a freedom of manners, very unlike the gloomy strictness of his sect; and among other convivial exhibitions, sung, (and some traditions say, composed on the spur of the occasion,) "Kirk wad let me be," with such effect, that the soldiers swore he was a d——d honest fellow, and that it was impossible *he* could belong to those hellish conventicles; and so gave him his liberty.

The

The first stanza of this song, a little altered, is a favorite kind of dramatic interlude acted at country weddings, in the south-west parts of the kingdom. A young fellow is dressed up like an old beggar; a peruke, commonly made of carded tow, represents hoary locks; an old bonnet; a ragged plaid, or surtout, bound with a straw-rope for a girdle; a pair of old shoes, with straw-ropes twisted round his ancles, as is done by shepherds in snowy weather: his face they disguise as like wretched old age as they can: in this plight he is brought into the wedding-house, frequently to the astonishment of strangers who are not in the secret, and begins to sing—

"O, I am a silly auld man,
"My name it is auld Glenae,* &c."

He is asked to drink, and by and by to dance, which, after some uncouth excuses he is prevailed on to do, the fiddler playing the tune, which here is commonly called, "Auld Glenae;" in short, he is all the time so plied with liquor that he

* Glenae, on the small river Ae, in Annandale; the seat and designation of an ancient branch, and the present representative, of the gallant but unfortunate Dalziels of Carnwath.———This is the *Author's* note.

he is understood to get intoxicated, and with all the ridiculous gesticulations of an old drunken beggar, he dances and staggers until he falls on the floor; yet still in all his riot, nay in his rolling and tumbling on the floor, with some or other drunken motion of his body, he beats time to the music, till at last he is supposed to be carried out dead drunk.

Musing on the roaring Ocean.

I COMPOSED these verses out of compliment to a Mrs. M'Lachlan, whose husband is an officer in the East-Indies.

Blythe was she.

I COMPOSED these verses while I stayed at Ochtertyre with Sir William Murray.—The lady, who was also at Ochtertyre at the same time, was the well-known toast, Miss Euphemia Murray of Lentrose, who was called, and very justly, The Flower of Strathmore.

Johnny

Johnny Faa, or the Gypsie Laddie.

THE people in Ayrshire begin this song—

"The gypsies cam to my Lord Cassili's yett"—

They have a great many more stanzas in this song than I ever yet saw in any printed copy.—The castle is still remaining at Maybole, where his lordship shut up his wayward spouse and kept her for life.

To daunton me.

THE two following old stanzas to this tune have some merit:

To daunton me, to daunton me,
O ken ye what it is that'll daunton me?—
There's eighty eight and eighty nine,
And a' that I hae been borne sinsyne,
There's cess and press* and Presbytrie,
I think it will do meikle for to daunton me.

But

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* Scot and lot.

But to wanton me, to wanton me,
O ken ye what it is that wad wanton me—
To see gude corn upon the rigs,
And banishment amang the Whigs,
And right restored where right sud be,
I think it would do meikle for to wanton me.

The Bonie Lass made the Bed to me.

"THE Bonie Lass made the Bed to me," was composed on an amour of Charles II. when sculking in the North, about Aberdeen, in the time of the usurpation. He formed *une petite affaire* with a daughter of the House of Port-letham, who was the "lass that made the bed to him:"—two verses of it are,

I kiss'd her lips sae rosy red,
While the tear stood blinkin in her e'e;
I said my lassie dinna cry
For ye ay shall mak the bed to me.

She took her mither's winding sheet,
And o't she made a sark to me;
Blythe and merry may she be,
The lass that made the bed to me.

Absence.

A song in the manner of Shenstone.

THIS song and air are both by Dr. Blacklock.

I had a Horse and I had nae mair.

THIS story was founded on fact. A John Hunter, ancestor to a very respectable farming family who live in a place in the parish, I think, of Galston, called Barr-mill, was the luckless hero that "had a horse and had nae mair."—For some little youthful follies he found it necessary to make a retreat to the West-Highlands, where "he feed himself to a *Highland* Laird," for that is the expression of all the oral editions of the song I ever heard.—The present Mr. Hunter, who told me the anecdote, is the great grandchild to our hero.

Up and warn a' Willie.

THIS edition of the song I got from *Tom Niel*,

Niel,* of facetious fame, in Edinburgh. The expression, "Up and warn a' Willie," alludes to the Crantara, or warning of a Highland Clan to arms. Not understanding this, the Lowlanders in the west, and south, say, "Up and *waur* them a," &c.

A Rose-bud by my early Walk.

THIS song I composed on Miss Jenny Cruikshank, only child to my worthy friend Mr. Wm. Cruikshank, of the High-School, Edinburgh. The air is by a David Sillar, quondam Merchant, and now Schoolmaster in Irvine. He is the *Davie* to whom I address my printed poetical epistle in the measure of the Cherry and the Slae.

Auld

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* *Tom Neil* was a carpenter in Edinburgh, and lived chiefly by making coffins. He was also Presenter, or Clerk, in one of the churches. He had a good strong voice, and was greatly distinguished by his powers of mimicry, and his humorous manner of singing the old Scottish ballads. E.

Auld Rob Morris.

IT is remark-worthy that the song of "Hooly and Fairly," in all the old editions of it, is called "The Drunken Wife o' Galloway," which localizes it to that country.

Rattlin, roarin Willie.

THE last stanza of this song is mine; it was composed out of compliment to one of the worthiest fellows in the world, William Dunbar, Esq. writer to the signet, Edinburgh, and Colonel of the Crochallan corps, a club of wits who took that title at the time of raising the fencible regiments.

Where braving angry Winter's Storms.

THIS song I composed on one of the most accomplished of women, Miss Peggy Chalmers that was, now Mrs. Lewis Hay, of Forbes and Co.'s bank, Edinburgh.

Tibbie,

Tibbie, I hae seen the Day.

THIS song I composed about the age of seventeen.

Nancy's Ghost.

THIS song is by Dr. Blacklock.

Tune your Fiddles, &c.

THIS song was composed by the Rev. John Skinner, Nonjurer Clergyman at Linshart, near Peterhead. He is likewise the author of Tullochgorum, Ewie wi' the Crooked Horn, John o' Badenyond, &c. and what is of still more consequence, he is one of the worthiest of mankind. He is the author of an ecclesiastical history of Scotland. The air is by Mr. Marshall, butler to the Duke of Gordon; the first composer of strathspeys of the age. I have been told by somebody who had it of Marshall himself, that he took the idea of his three most celebrated

celebrated pieces, The Marquis of Huntley's Reel, His Farewel, and Miss Admiral Gordon's Reel, from the old air, "The German Lairdie."

Gill Morice.

THIS plaintive ballad ought to have been called Child Maurice, and not Gill Morice. In its present dress, it has gained immortal honor from Mr. Home's taking from it the ground-work of his fine tragedy of Douglas. But I am of opinion that the present ballad is a modern composition; perhaps not much above the age of the middle of the last century; at least I should be glad to see or hear of a copy of the present words prior to 1650. That it was taken from an old ballad, called Child Maurice, now lost, I am inclined to believe; but the present one may be classed with Hardycanute,* Kenneth, Duncan, the Laird of Woodhouselie, Lord Livingston, Binnorie, The Death of Monteith, and many other modern productions, which have been swallowed

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* In the year 1719, the celebrated poem or ballad of *Hardyknute*, first appeared at Edinburgh, as "a fragment," in a folio pamphlet of twelve pages.

RITSON.

swallowed by many readers, as antient fragments of old poems. This beautiful plaintive tune was composed by Mr. M'Gibbon, the selector of a collection of Scots tunes.

R. R.

In addition to the observations on Gill Morris, I add, that of the songs which Capt. Riddel mentions, Kenneth and Duncan are juvenile compositions of Mr. M'Kenzie, The Man of Feeling.—M'Kenzie's father shewed them in MSS. to Dr. Blacklock, as the productions of his son, from which the Doctor rightly prognosticated that the young poet would make in his more advanced years, a respectable figure in the world of letters.

This I had from Blacklock.

Tibbie Dunbar.

THIS tune is said to be the composition of John M'Gill, fiddler, in Girvan. He called it after his own name.

When

When I upon thy Bosom lean.

THIS song was the work of a very worthy, facetious old fellow, John Lapraik, late of Dalfram, near Muirkirk; which little property he was obliged to sell in consequence of some connexion as security for some persons concerned in that villainous bubble, THE AYR BANK. He has often told me that he composed this song one day when his wife had been fretting o'er their misfortunes.*

My

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* This is the very song *" that some kind husband had addrest to some sweet wife,"* alluded to with such exquisite delicacy in the *Epistle to J. Lapraik.*

" There was ae *sang* amang the rest,
" Aboon them a' it pleas'd me best,
" That some kind husband had addrest
" To some sweet wife:
" It thrill'd the heart-strings thro' the breast,
" A' to the life."

' When I upon thy bosom lean
And fondly clasp thee a' my ain,
I glory in the sacred ties
That made us ane, wha ance were twain:

A mutual

My Harry was a Gallant gay.

Tune, Highlander's Lament.

THE oldest title I ever heard to this air was, "The Highland Watch's Farewel to Ireland." The chorus I picked up from an old woman in Dunblane; the rest of the song is mine.

The

'A mutual flame inspires us baith,
The tender look, the melting kiss:
Even years shall ne'er destroy our love
But only gie us change o' bliss.

'Hae I a wish? its a' for thee;
I ken thy wish is me to please;'
Our moments pass sae smooth away,
That numbers on us look and gaze,
Weel pleas'd they see our happy days,
Nor envy's sel finds aught to blame;
And ay when weary cares arise,
Thy bosom still shall be my hame.

'I'll lay me there, and take my rest,
And if that aught disturb my dear,
I'll bid her laugh her cares away,
And beg her not to drap a tear:
Hae I a joy! its a' her ain;
United still her heart and mine;
They're like the woodbine round the tree,
That's twin'd till death shall them disjoin.'

The Highland Character.

THIS tune was the composition of Gen. Reid, and called by him "The Highland, or 42d Regiment's March."

The words are by Sir Harry Erskine.

Leader Haughs and Yarrow.

THERE is in several collections, the old song of Leader Haughs and Yarrow. It seems to have been the work of one of our itinerant minstrels, as he calls himself, at the conclusion of his song, "*Minstrel Burn.*"

The Tailor fell thro' the Bed, Thimble an' a'.

THIS air is the march of the Corporation of Tailors. The second and fourth stanzas are mine.

Beware o' Bonie Ann.

I COMPOSED this song out of compliment to Miss Ann Masterton, the daughter of my friend, Allan Masterton, the author of the air of Strathallan's Lament, and two or three others in this work.

Ye gallants bright I red you right,
Beware o' bonie Ann;
Her comely face sae fu' o' grace,
Your heart she will trepan.
Her een sae bright, like stars by night,
Her skin is like the swan;
Sae jimply lac'd her genty waist,
That sweetly ye might span.

Youth, grace, and love, attendant move,
And pleasure leads the van:
In a' their charms, and conquering arms,
They wait on bonie Ann.
The captive bands may chain the hands,
But love enslaves the man;
Ye gallants braw, I red you a',
Beware o' bonie Ann.

This

This is no mine ain House.

THE first half stanza is old, the rest is Ramsay's. The old words are—

O this is no mine ain house,
My ain house, my ain house;
This is no mine ain house,
I ken by the biggin o't.

There's bread and cheese are my door-cheeks,
Are my door-cheeks, are my door-cheeks;
There's bread and cheese are my door-cheeks,
And pan-cakes the riggin o't.

This is no my ain wean,
My ain wean, my ain wean;
This is no my ain wean,
I ken by the greetie o't.

I'll tak the curchie aff my head,
Aff my head, aff my head;
I'll tak the curchie aff my head,
And row't about the feetie o't.

The tune is an old Highland air, called *Shuan truish willighan.*

Laddie, lie near me.

THIS song is by Blacklock.

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*The Gardener wi' his Paidle.**

THIS air is the Gardenér's March. The title of the song only is old; the rest is mine.

When rosy May comes in wi' flowers,
To deck her gay, green-spreading bowers;
Then busy, busy are his hours,
The gard'ner wi' his paidle.

The chrystal waters gently fa';
The merry birds are lovers a';
The scented breezes round him blaw,
The gard'ner wi' his paidle.

When

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* This is the original of the song that appears in Dr. Currie's ed. vol. iv. p. 103; it is there called *Dainty Davie.*

When purple morning starts the hare
To steal upon her early fare;
Then thro' the dews he maun repair,
The gard'ner wi' his paidle.

When day expiring in the west,
The curtain draws of nature's rest;
He flies to her arms he lo'es best,
The gard'ner wi' his paidle.

The Day returns, my Bosom burns.

Tune, Seventh of November.

I COMPOSED this song out of compliment to one of the happiest and worthiest married couples in the world, Robert Riddel, Esq. of Glenriddel, and his lady. At their fire-side I have enjoyed more pleasant evenings than at all the houses of fashionable people in this country put together; and to their kindness and hospitality I am indebted for many of the happiest hours of my life.

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*The Gaberlunzie-Man.**

THE Gaberlunzie-Man is supposed to commemorate an intrigue of James the Vth. Mr. Callander of Craigforth, published some years ago, an edition of "Christ's Kirk on the Green," and the "Gaberlunzie-Man," with notes critical and historical. James the Vth is said to have been fond of Gosford, in Aberlady Parish, and that it was suspected by his cotemporaries, that in his frequent excursions to that part of the country he had other purposes in view besides golfing and archery. Three favourite ladies, Sandilands, Weir, and Oliphant; (one of them resided at Gosford, and the others in the neighbourhood,) were occasionally visited by their royal and gallant admirer, which gave rise to the following satirical advice to his Majesty, from Sir David Lindsay, of the Mount; Lord Lyon.†

Sow not your seed on Sandylands,
Spend not your strength in Weir,
And ride not on an Elephant,
For spoiling o' your gear.

My

* A wallet-man or tinker, who appears to have been formerly a jack of all trades.

† Sir David was *Lion King-at-Arms*, under James V.

My Bonnie Mary.

This air is Oswald's; the first half-stanza of the song is old, *the rest mine.*

Go fetch to me a pint o' wine,
An' fill it in a silver tassie;
That I may drink before I go,
A service to my bonnie lassie;
The boat rocks at the pier o' Leith;
Fu' loud the wind blaws frae the ferry;
The ship rides by the Berwick-law,
And I maun lea'e my bonnie Mary.

The trumpets sound, the banners fly,
The glittering spears are ranked ready;
The shouts o' war are heard afar,
The battle closes thick and bloody;
But it's not the roar o' sea or shore
Wad make me langer wish to tarry;
Nor shouts o' war that's heard afar,
It's leaving thee, my bonnie Mary.*

* This song, which Burns here acknowledges to be his own, was first introduced by him in a letter to Mrs. Dunlop, as two *old* stanzas.

See Letters, vol. ii. p. 188.

The Black Eagle.

THIS song is by Dr. Fordyce, whose merits as a prose writer are well known.

Jamie come try me.

THIS air is Oswald's; the song mine.

The lazy Mist.

THIS song is mine.

Johnie Cope.

THIS satirical song was composed to commemorate General Cope's defeat at Preston Pans, in 1745, when he marched against the Clans.

The air was the tune of an old song, of which I have heard some verses, but now only remember the title, which was

Will ye go to the coals in the morning.

I love

I love my Jean.

THIS air is by Marshal; the song I composed out of compliment to Mrs. Burns.

N. B. It was during the honey-moon.

Cease, cease my dear Friend to explore.

THE song is by Dr. Blacklock; I believe, but am not quite certain, that the air is his too.

Auld Robin Gray.

THIS air was formerly called, "The Bridegroom greets when the Sun gangs down."

Donald and Flora.

THIS is one of those fine Gaelic tunes, preserved from time immemorial in the Hebrides; they

they seem to be the ground-work of many of our finest Scots pastoral tunes. The words of this song were written to commemorate the unfortunate expedition of General Burgoyne in America, in 1777.

O were I on Parnassus' Hill.

THIS air is Oswald's: the song I made out of compliment to Mrs. Burns.

The Captive Ribband.

THIS air is called Robie donna Gorach.

There's a Youth in this City.

THIS air is claimed by Neil Gow, who calls it his lament for his brother. The first half-stanza of the song is old; the rest is mine.

There's

There's a youth in this city, it were a great pity
That he from our lasses should wander awa;
For he's bonie and braw, weel-favour'd with a',
And his hair has a natural buckle and a'.
His coat is the hue of his bonnet sae blue;
His fecket* is white as the new-driven snaw;
His hose they are blae, and his shoon like the slae,
And his clear siller buckles they dazzle us a'.
His coat is the hue, &c.

For beauty and fortune the laddie's been courtin;
Weel-featur'd, weel-tocher'd, weel mounted and braw;
But chiefly the siller, *that* gars him gang till her,
The pennie's the jewel that beautifies a'.—
There's Meg wi' the mailin, that fain wad a haen him,
And Susy whase daddy was Laird o' the ha';
There's lang-tocher'd Nancy maist fetters his fancy,
—But the laddie's dear sel he lo'es dearest of a'.

My

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* *Fecket*—an under-waistcoat with sleeves.

My Heart's in the Highlands.

THE first half-stanza of this song is old; the rest is mine.

My heart's in the Highlands, my heart is not here;
My heart's in the Highlands a chasing the deer;
Chasing the wild deer, and following the roe,
My heart's in the Highlands wherever I go.
Farewel to the Highlands, farewel to the North,
The birth-place of valour, the country of worth;
Wherever I wander, wherever I rove,
The hills of the Highlands for ever I love.

Farewel to the mountains high covered with snow;
Farewel to the straths and green vallies below:
Farewel to the forests and wild-hanging woods;
Farewel to the torrents and loud-pouring floods.
My heart's in the Highlands, my heart is not here,
My heart's in the Highlands a chasing the deer:
Chasing the wild deer, and following the roe,
My heart's in the Highlands, wherever I go.

Ca' the Ewes to the Knowes.

THIS beautiful song is in the true old Scotch taste, yet I do not know that either air, or words, were in print before.

The Bridal o't.

THIS song is the work of a Mr. Alexander Ross, late schoolmaster at Lochlee; and author of a beautiful Scots poem, called the Fortunate Shepherdess.

Todlen Hame.

THIS is perhaps the first bottle song that ever was composed.

The Braes o' Ballochmyle.

THIS air is the composition of my friend Allan Masterton, in Edinburgh. I composed the verses on the amiable and excellent family of Whitefoord's leaving Ballochmyle, when Sir John's misfortunes had obliged him to sell the estate.

The

The rantin Dog the Daddie o't.

I COMPOSED this song pretty early in life, and sent it to a young girl, a very particular acquaintance of mine, who was at that time under a cloud.

O wha my babie-clouts will buy?
Wha will tent me when I cry?
Wha will kiss me whare I lie?
The rantin dog the daddie o't.—

Wha will own he did the faut?
Wha will buy my groanin-maut?
Wha will tell me how to ca't?
The rantin dog the daddie o't.—

When I mount the creepie-chair,
Wha will sit beside me there?
Gie me Rob, I seek nae mair,
The rantin dog the daddie o't.—

Wha will crack to me my lane?
Wha will mak me fidgin fain?*
Wha will kiss me o'er again?
The rantin dog the daddie o't.—

The

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* *Fidgin fain*—Fidgeting with delight—Tickled with pleasure.

The Shepherd's Preference.

THIS song is Blacklock's.—I don't know how it came by the name, but the oldest appellation of the air, was, "Whistle and I'll come to you my lad."

It has little affinity to the tune commonly known by that name.

The bonie Banks of Ayr.

I COMPOSED this song as I convoyed my chest so far on the road to Greenock, where I was to embark in a few days for Jamaica.

I meant it as my farewel Dirge to my native land.*

John

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* "I had taken the last farewel of my few friends; *my chest was on the road to Greenock;* I had composed the last song I should ever measure in Caledonia, *The gloomy Night is gathering fast.*"

Letter to Dr. Moore, vol. i. p. 35. *Dr. Currie's ed.*

* *John o' Badenyond.*

This excellent song is the composition of my worthy friend, old Skinner, at Linshart.

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† *A Waukrife Minnie.*

I PICKED up this old song and tune from a country girl in Nithsdale.—I never met with it elsewhere in Scotland.

Whare are you gaun, my bonie lass,
Whare are you gaun, my hinnie,
She answer'd me right saucilie,
An errand for my minnie.

O whare live ye, my bonie lass,
O whare live ye, my hinnie,
By yon burn-side, gin ye maun ken
In a wee house wi' my minnie.

But

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* The words of Burns's celebrated Dirge—beginning, "*Man was made to mourn,*" were composed to this tune. E.

† A watchful mother.

But I foor up the glen at e'en,
To see my bonie lassie;
And lang before the gray morn cam,
She was na hauf sae saucie.

O weary fa' the Waukrife cock,
And the foumart lay his crawin!
He wauken'd the auld wife frae her sleep,
A wee blink or the dawin.

An angry wife I wat she raise,
And o'er the bed she brought her;
And wi' a mickle hazle rung
She made her a weel pay'd dochter.

O fare thee weel, my bonie lass!
O fare thee weel, my hinnie!
Thou art a gay and a bonie lass,
But thou has a waukrife minnie.*

Tullochgorum.

THIS, first of songs, is the master-piece of my old friend Skinner. He was passing the day,

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* The editor thinks it respectful to the poet to preserve the verses he thus recovered.

at the town of Cullen I think it was, in a friend's house whose name was Montgomery.—Mrs. Montgomery observing, *en passant*, that the beautiful reel of Tullochgorum wanted words, she begged them of Mr. Skinner, who gratified her wishes, and the wishes of every lover of Scottish song, in this most excellent ballad.

These particulars I had from the author's son, Bishop Skinner, at Aberdeen.

For a' that and a' that.

THIS song is mine,* all except the chorus.

Auld lang syne.

RAMSAY here, as usual with him, has taken the idea of the song, and the first line, from the old fragment, which may be seen in *the Museum*, vol. v.

Willie

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* This is part of the BARD'S SONG in the JOLLY BEGGARS.

Willie brew'd a Peck o' Maut.

THIS air is Masterton's; the song mine.—The occasion of it was this.—Mr. Wm. Nicol, of the High School, Edinburgh, during the autumn vacation being at Moffat, honest Allan, who was at that time on a visit to Dalswinton, and I went to pay Nicol a visit.—We had such a joyous meeting that Mr. Masterton and I agreed, each in our own way, that we should celebrate the business.

Killiecrankie.

THE battle of Killiecrankie was the last stand made by the Clans for James, after his abdication. Here the gallant Lord Dundee fell in the moment of victory, and with him fell the hopes of the party.—General M'Kay, when he found the Highlanders did not pursue his flying army, said, "Dundee must be killed, or he never would have overlooked this advantage."—A great stone marks the spot where Dundee fell.

The Ewie wi' the crooked Horn.

ANOTHER excellent song of old Skinner's.

Craigie-burn Wood.

IT is remarkable of this air, that it is the confine of that country where the greatest part of our Lowland music, (so far as from the title, words, &c. we can localize it,) has been composed. From Craigie-burn, near Moffat, until one reaches the West Highlands, we have scarcely one slow air of any antiquity.

The song was composed on a passion which a Mr. Gillespie, a particular friend of mine, had for a Miss Lorimer, afterwards a Mrs. Whelpdale.—The young lady was born at Craigie-burn-wood.—The chorus is part of an old foolish ballad.—

Beyond thee, dearie, beyond thee, dearie,
And O to be lying beyond thee,
O sweetly, soundly, weel may he sleep,
That's laid in the bed beyond thee.

Sweet

Sweet closes the evening on Craigie-burn-wood,
And blythely awakens the morrow;
But the pride of the spring in the Craigie-burn-wood,
Can yield me to nothing but sorrow.
Beyond thee, &c.

I see the spreading leaves and flowers,
I hear the wild birds singing;
But pleasure they hae nane for me,
While care my heart is wringing.
Beyond thee, &c.

I canna tell, I maun na tell,
I dare na for your anger;
But secret love will break my heart,
If I conceal it langer.
Beyond thee, &c.

I see thee graceſu', straight and tall,
I see thee sweet and bonie,
But oh, what will my torments be,
If thou refuse thy Johnie!
Beyond thee, &c.

To see thee in anither's arms,
In love to lie and languish,
'Twad be my dead, that will be seen,
My heart wad burst wi' anguish.
Beyond thee, &c.

But

But Jeanie, say thou wilt be mine,
Say, thou lo'es nane before me;
And a' my days o' life to come
I'll gratefully adore thee.
Beyond thee, &c.

Frae the Friends and Land I love,

I added the four last lines by way of giving a turn to the theme of the poem, such as it is.

Frae the friends and land I love.
Driv'n by fortune's felly spite;
Frae my best belov'd I rove,
Never mair to taste delight.
Never mair maun hope to find
Ease frae toil, relief frae care,
When remembrance racks the mind,
Pleasures but unveil despair.

Brightest climes shall mirk appear,
Desart ilka blooming shore;
Till the fates, nae mair severe,
Friendship, love and peace restore.
Till revenge wi' laurel'd head
Bring our banish'd hame again;
And ilk loyal, bonie lad,
Cross the seas and win his ain.

Hughie

Hughie Graham.

THERE are several editions of this ballad.—This, here inserted, is from oral tradition in Ayrshire, where, when I was a boy, it was a popular song.—It, originally, had a simple old tune, which I have forgotten.

Our lords are to the mountains gane,
A hunting o' the fallow deer,
And they have gripet Hughie Graham
For stealing o' the bishop's mare.

And they have tied him hand and foot,
And led him up, thro' Stirling town;
The lads and lasses met him there,
Cried, Hughie Graham thou'rt a loun.

O lowse my right hand free, he says,
And put my braid sword in the same;
He's no in Stirling town this day,
Dare tell the tale to Hughie Graham.

Up then bespake the brave Whitefoord,
As he sat by the bishop's knee,
Five hundred white stots I'll gie you
If ye'll let Hughie Graham free.

O haud

O haud your tongue, the bishop says,
And wi' your pleading let me be;
For tho' ten Grahams were in his coat,
Hughie Graham this day shall die.

Up then bespake the fair Whitefoord,
As she sat by the bishop's knee;
Five hundred white pence I'll gie you,
If ye'll gie Hughie Graham to me.

O haud your tongue now lady fair,
And wi' your pleading let it be;
Altho' ten Grahams were in his coat,
Its for my honor he maun die.

They've ta'en him to the gallows knowe,
He looked to the gallows tree,
Yet never colour left his cheek,
Nor ever did he blink his e'e.

At length he looked round about,
To see whatever he could spy:
And there he saw his auld father,
And he was weeping bitterly.

O haud your tongue, my father dear,
And wi' your weeping let it be;
Thy weeping's sairer on my heart,
Than a' that they can do to me.

And ye may gie my brother John,
My sword that's bent in the middle clear.
And let him come at twelve o'clock,
And see me pay the bishop's mare.

And ye may gie my brother James
My sword that's bent in the middle brown,
And bid him come at four o'clock,
And see his brother Hugh cut down.

Remember me to Maggy my wife,
The neist time ye gang o'er the moor,
Tell her she staw the bishop's mare,
Tell her she was the bishop's whore.

And ye may tell my kith and kin,
I never did disgrace their blood;
And when they meet the bishop's cloak
To mak it shorter by the hood.*

A Southland

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* Burns did not *chuse* to be quite correct in stating that this copy of the ballad of *Hughie Graham* is printed from oral tradition in Ayrshire. The fact is, that four of the stanzas are either altered or super-added by himself.

Of this number the third and eighth are original; the ninth

A Southland Jenny.

THIS is a popular Ayrshire song, though the notes were never taken down before.—It, as well as many of the ballad tunes in this collection, was written from Mrs. Burns's voice.

My

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ninth and tenth have received his corrections. Perhaps pathos was never more touching than in the picture of the hero singling out his poor aged father from the crowd of spectators; and the simple grandeur of preparation for this afflicting circumstance in the verse that immediately precedes it is matchless.

That the reader may properly appreciate the value of Burns's touches, I here subjoin two verses from the most correct copy of the ballad, as it is printed in the *Border Minstrelsy*, vol. ii. p. 324.

"He looked over his left shoulder
And for to see what he might see;
There was he aware of his auld father,
Came tearing his hair most piteouslie.

"O hald

*My Tocher's the Jewel.**

THIS tune is claimed by Nathaniel Gow.—It is notoriously taken from "The Muckin o' Geordie's Byre."—It is also to be found, long prior to Nathaniel Gow's æra, in Aird's Selection of Airs and Marches, the first edition, under the name of, "The Highway to Edinburgh."

Then guid Wife count the Lawin.

THE chorus of this is part of an old song, one stanza of which I recollect.

Every day my wife tells me
That ale and brandy will ruin me;
But if gude liquor be my dead,
This shall be written on my head.—
O gude wife count, &c.

There'll

"O hald your tongue, my father, he says,
And see that ye dinna weep for me!
For they may ravish me o' my life,
But they canna banish me from heaven hie!"

* *Tocher*—Marriage portion.

There'll never be Peace till Jamie comes Hame.

THIS tune is sometimes called—"There's few "gude Fellows when Willie's awa."—But I never have been able to meet with any thing else of the song than the title.

I do confess thou art sae fair.

THIS song is altered from a poem by Sir Robert Ayton, private secretary to Mary and Anne, queens of Scotland.—The poem is to be found in James Watson's Collection of Scots Poems, the earliest collection printed in Scotland.—I think that I have improved the simplicity of the sentiments, by giving them a Scots dress.

I do confess thou are so fair,
I wad been o'er the lugs in luve;
Had I na found the slightest prayer
That lips could speak, thy heart could muve.

I do confess thee sweet, but find
Thou art sae thriftless o' thy sweets,

Thy

Thy favors are the silly wind
That kisses ilka thing it meets.

See yonder rose-bud, rich in dew,
Amang its native briers sae coy,
How sune it tines its scent and hue
When pu'd and worn a common toy!

Sic fate e'er lang shall thee betide,
Tho' thou may gayly bloom a while;
Yet sune thou shalt be thrown aside,
Like ony common weed and vile.*

The

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* The following are the old words of this song:

I do confess thou 'rt smooth and fair,
And I might have gone near to love thee;
Had I not found the slightest prayer
That lips could speak, had power to move thee;
But I can let thee now alone
As worthy to be lov'd by none.

I do confess thou'rt sweet, yet find
Thee such an unthrift of thy sweets,
Thy favours are but like the wind
That kisseth every thing it meets.
And since thou can'st with more than one,
Thou'rt worthy to be kiss'd by none.

The Soger Laddie.

THE first verse of this is old: the rest is by Ramsay.—The tune seems to be the same with a slow air, called "Jacky Hume's Lament"—or, "The Hollin Buss"—or, "Ken ye what Meg o' the Mill has gotten?"

Where

The morning rose, that untouch'd stands,
Arm'd with her briars, how sweetly smells!
But pluck'd and strain'd through ruder hands,
Her sweet no longer with her dwells;
But scent and beauty both are gone,
And leaves fall from her, one by one.

Such fate, ere long, will thee betide,
When thou hast handled been awhile!
Like sere-flowers to be thrown aside,
And I shall sigh, while some will smile,
To see thy love to every one
Hath brought thee to be lov'd by none!

This song may be seen in Playford's *Select Ayres*, 1659, folio, under the title of a "Song to a forsaken Mistresse."

It is also printed in Ellis's *Specimens of the early English Poets*, vol. iii. p. 325.

Where wad bonie Annie lie.

THE old name of this tune is.—

"Whare'll our Gudeman lie."

A silly old stanza of it runs thus—

O whare'll our gudeman lie,
Gudeman lie, gudeman lie,
O whare'll our gudeman lie,
Till he shute o'er the simmer?

Up amang the hen-bawks,
The hen-bawks, the hen-bawks,
Up amang the hen-bawks,
Amang the rotten timmer.

Galloway Tam.

I HAVE seen an interlude (acted at a wedding) to this tune, called "The Wooing of the Maiden." —These entertainments are now much worn out in this part of Scotland.—Two are still retained in Nithsdale, viz. Jilly Pure Auld Glenae, and this one, The Wooing of the Maiden.

As I cam down by yon Castle Wall.

THIS is a very popular Ayrshire song.

Lord Ronald my Son.

THIS air, a very favourite one in Ayrshire, is evidently the original of Lochaber.—In this manner, most of our finest more modern airs have had their origin. Some early minstrel, or musical shepherd, composed the simple artless original air; which being picked up by the more learned musician, took the improved form it bears.

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*O'er the Moor amang the Heather.**

THIS song is the composition of a Jean Glover, a girl who was not only a whore, but also a thief; and in one or other character has visited most of the Correction Houses in the West. —She was born I believe in Kilmarnock,—I took

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* Probably some of my readers will be curious to see this production; I here subjoin it :—

Comin thro' the craigs o' Kyle,
Amang the bonnie blooming heather,

took the song down from her singing as she was strolling through the country, with a slight-of-hand blackguard.

To

There I met a bonnie lassie,
Keeping a' her yowes thegither,
O'er the moor amang the heather,
O'er the moor amang the heather,
There I met a bonnie lassie,
Keeping a' her yowes thegither.

Says I my dearie where is thy hame,
In moor or dale pray tell me whether?
She says, I tent the fleecy flocks
That feed amang the blooming heather,
O'er the moor, &c.

We laid us down upon a bank,
Sae warm and sunny was the weather,
She left her flocks at large to rove
Amang the bonnie blooming heather.
O'er the moor, &c.

While thus we lay she sang a sang,
Till echo rang a mile and farther,
And ay the burden o' the sang
Was o'er the moor amang the heather.
O'er the moor, &c.

To the Rose Bud.

THIS song is the composition of a —— Johnson, a joiner in the neighbourhood of Belfast.—The tune is by Oswald, altered, evidently, from Jockie's Gray Breeks.

Yon wild mossy Mountains.

THIS tune is by Oswald. The song alludes to a part of my private history, which it is of no consequence to the world to know.

Yon wild mossy mountains sae lofty and wide,
That nurse in their bosom the youth o' the Clyde,
Where

She charm'd my heart, and aye sinsyne,
I could na think on any ither:
By sea and sky she shall be mine!
The bonnie lass amang the heather.
O'er the moor, &c.

Where the grouse lead their coveys thro' the heather to feed,
And the shepherd tents his flock as he pipes on his reed:
Where the grouse, &c.

Not Gowrie's rich valley, nor Forth's sunny shores,
To me hae the charms o'yon wild, mossy moors;
For there, by a lanely, and sequester'd stream,
Resides a sweet lassie, my thought and my dream.

Amang thae wild mountains shall still be my path,
Ilk stream foaming down its ain green, narrow strath;
For there, wi my lassie, the day lang I rove,
While o'er us unheeded, flie the swift hours o' love.

She is not the fairest, altho' she is fair;
O' nice education but sma' is her share;
Her parentage humble as humble can be;
But I lo'e the dear lassie because she lo'es me.*

* "I love my love because I know my love loves me."
Maid in Bedlam.

To beauty what man but maun yield him a prize,
In her armour of glances, and blushes, and sighs;
And when wit, and refinement ha'e polished her darts,
They dazzle our een, as they flie to our hearts.

But kindness, sweet kindness, in the fond sparkling e'e,
Has lustre outshining the diamond to me;
And the heart-beating love, as I'm clasp'd in her arms,
O, these are my lassie's all-conquering charms!

It is na, Jean, thy bonie Face.

THESE were originally English verses:—I gave them their Scots dress.

Eppie M'Nab.

THE old song with this title, has more wit than decency.

Wha

Wha is that at my Bower Door?

THIS tune is also known by the name of, "Lass an I come near thee." The words are mine.

WHA is that at my bower door?
O wha is it but Findlay;
Then gae your gate ye'se nae be here!
Indeed maun I, quo' Findlay.
What mak ye sae like a thief?
O come and see, quo' Findlay;
Before the morn ye'll work mischief;
Indeed will I, quo' Findlay.

Gif I rise and let you in?
Let me in, quo' Findlay;
Ye'll keep me waukin wi' your din;
Indeed will I, quo' Findlay.
In my bower if ye should stay?
Let me stay, quo' Findlay;
I fear ye'll bide till break o' day;
Indeed will I, quo' Findlay.

Here this night if ye remain,
I'll remain, quo' Findlay;
I dread ye'll learn the gate again;
Indeed will I, quo' Findlay;

What

What may pass within this bower,
Let it pass, quo' Findlay;
Ye maun conceal 'till your last hour;
Indeed will I, quo' Findlay!

Thou art gane awa.

THIS tune is the same with, "Haud awa frae me, Donald."

The Tears I shed must ever fall.

THIS song of genius, was composed by a Miss Cranston.*—It wanted four lines to make all the stanzas suit the music, which I added, and are the four first of the last stanza.

No cold approach, no alter'd mien,
Just what would make suspicion start;
No pause the dire extremes between,
He made me blest—and broke my heart!

The

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* This lady is now married to professor Dugald Stewart.

The bonie wee Thing.

COMPOSED on my little idol, "The charming, lovely Davies."

The tither Morn.

THIS tune is originally from the Highlands.—I have heard a Gaelic song to it, which I was told was very clever, but not by any means a lady's song.

A Mother's Lament for the Death of her Son.

THIS most beautiful tune is, I think, the happiest composition of that bard-born genius, John Riddel, of the family of Glencarnock, at Ayr.—The words were composed to commemorate the much lamented, and premature death of James Ferguson, Esq. jun. of Craigdarroch.

Daintie

Daintie Davie.

THIS song, tradition says, and the composition itself confirms it, was composed on the Rev. David Williamson's begetting the daughter of Lady Cherrytrees with child, while a party of dragoons were searching her house to apprehend him for being an adherent to the solemn league and covenant.—The pious woman had put a lady's night-cap on him, and had laid him a-bed with her own daughter, and passed him to the soldiery as a lady, her daughter's bedfellow.—A mutilated stanza or two are to be found in Herd's collection, but the original song consists of five or six stanzas, and were their *delicacy* equal to their *wit* and *humor*, they would merit a place in any collection.—The first stanza is,—

Being pursued by the dragoons,
Within my bed he was laid down;
And weel I wat he was worth his room,
For he was my daintie Davie.

Ramsay's song, Luckie Nansie, though he calls it an old song with additions, seems to be all his own, except the chorus:

I was

I was a telling you,
Luckie Nansie, luckie Nansie,
Auld springs wad ding the new,
But ye wad never trow me.

Which I should conjecture to be part of a song, prior to the affair of Williamson.

Bob o' Dumblane.

RAMSAY, as usual, has modernized this song. The original, which I learned on the spot, from my old hostess in the principal inn there is;

Lassie, lend me your braw hemp heckle,
And I'll lend you my thripplin-kame;
My heckle is broken, it canna be gotten,
And we'll gae dance the bob o' Dumblane.

Twa gaed to the wood, to the wood, to the wood,
Twa gaed to the wood—three came hame;
An' it be na weel bobbit, weel bobbit, weel bobbit,
An' it be na weel bobbit, we'll bob it again.

I insert this song to introduce the following anecdote which I have heard well authenticated. In the evening of the day of the battle of Dumblane (Sheriff Muir) when the action was over, a Scots

a Scots officer in Argyle's army, observed to His Grace, that he was afraid the rebels would give out to the world that *they* had gotten the victory.—" Weel, weel," returned his Grace, alluding to the foregoing ballad, " if they think it be nae weel bobbit, we'll bob it again."

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* The battle of Dumblane, or Sheriff-Muir, was fought the 13th of November, 1715, between the Earl of Mar, for the Chevalier, and the Duke of Argyle, for the government. Both sides claimed the victory, the left wing of either army being routed. Ritson observes, it is very remarkable that the capture of Preston happened on the same day.

NOTE *referred to in page* 229.

A short account of JAMES TYTLER.

JAMES TYTLER was the son of a country clergyman in the presbytery of Brechin, and brother to Dr. Tytler, the translator of Callimachus. He was instructed by his father in classical learning and school divinity, and attained an accurate knowledge of the Latin and Greek languages, and an extensive acquaintance with biblical literature and scholastic theology. Having discovered an early predilection for the medical profession, he was put apprentice to a surgeon in Forfar, and afterwards sent to attend the medical

dical classes at Edinburgh. While a medical student, he cultivated experimental chemistry and controversial theology with equal assiduity. Unfortunately his religious opinions, not deemed orthodox, or calvinistical, connected him with a society of Glassites, and involved him in a marriage with a member of the society, which terminated in a separation. He now settled at Leith, as an apothecary, depending on the patronage of his religious connections; but his separation from the society, which happened soon after, with an unsteadiness that was natural to him, disappointed his expectations. When he ceased to be a Glassite, he ceased not to be a firm believer in the Christian revelation, and a zealous advocate of genuine Christianity; but he never afterwards held communion with any denomination of Christians. The neglect of his business was the unavoidable consequence of his attention to religious dissensions; and having contracted debts to a considerable amount, he was obliged to remove to Berwick, and afterwards to Newcastle. In both places he was employed in preparing chemical medicines for the druggists; but the liberality of his employers being insufficient to preserve an encreasing family from the evils of penury, he returned to Edinburgh, in the year 1772, in extreme poverty, and took refuge from the mole station of his creditors within the precincts of the sanctuary of Holyrood House, where debtors are privileged from arrests. At this period his wife deserted him and their five children, the youngest only six months old, and returned to her relations. He solaced himself for the privation of domestic happiness by composing a humorous ballad entitled "*The Pleasures of The Abbey,*" which was his first attempt in poetry. In a description of its inhabitants, the author himself is introduced in the 16th and 17th stanzas. In the avocation

liberality

of an author by profession, which he was now compelled to assume, he displayed a versatility of talent and a facility in writing unexampled in the transactions of the press. He commenced his literary career by a publication entitled "*Essays on the most important Subjects of natural and revealed Religion,*" which issued from the asylum for debtors, under the peculiar circumstances of being composed by himself, at the printing case, from his own conceptions, without a manuscript before him, and wrought off at a press of his own construction, by his own hands. He left this singular work, which was to be completed in two volumes 8vo. unfinished, and turned aside, to attack the opinions of a new religious sect called Bereans, in a "*Letter to Mr. John Barclay on the Doctrine of Assurance,*" in which he again performed the functions of author, compositor, and pressman. He next set forth with such assistance as he could find, a monthly publication, entitled "*The Gentleman and Lady's Magazine,*" which was soon abandoned for "*The Weekly Review,*" a literary miscellany, which, in its turn, was discontinued in a very short time. These publications, unavoidably disfigured with many typographical deformities, made him known to the booksellers; and from them he afterwards found constant employment in compilations, abridgments, translations, and miscellaneous essays. He now ventured to leave the miserable apartments which he had long occupied in the sanctuary for debtors, for more comfortable lodgings, first at Restalrig, and afterwards in the city, and if his prudence and steadiness had been equal to his talents and industry, he might have earned by his labours a complete maintenance, which never fell to his lot. As he wrote for subsistence, not from the vanity of authorship, he was engaged in many works which

which were anonymous, and in others which appeared with the names of his employers. He is editor or author of the following works: "*The Weekly Mirror*," a periodical publication which began in 1780. "*A System of Geography*," in 8vo. "*A History of Edinburgh*," 12mo. "*A Geographical, Historical, and Commercial Grammar*," 2 vols. 8vo. "*A Review of Dritchken's Theory of Inflammation*," 12mo. with a practical dedication. "*Remarks on Mr. Pinkerton's Introduction to the History of Scotland*," 8vo. "*A poetical Translation of Virgil's Eclogues*," 4to. "*A general Index to the Scots Magazine*." "*A System of Chemistry*," written at the expence of a gentleman who was to put his name to it, unpublished. He gave his assistance in preparing the System of Anatomy published by A. Bell, and was an occasional contributor to the "*Medical Commentaries*," and other periodical publications of the time. He was the principal editor of the 2d edition of the "*Encyclopedia Britannica*," and finished, with incredible labour, a large proportion of the more considerable scientific treatises and histories, and almost all the minor articles. He had an apartment assigned him in the printing-house, where he performed the offices of compiler, and corrector of the press, at a salary of *sixteen shillings a week!* When the third edition was undertaken, he was engaged as a stated contributor, upon more liberal terms, and wrote a larger share in the early volumes than is ascribed to him in the general preface. It was his misfortune to be continually drawn aside from the business of his employers by the delight he took in prosecuting experiments in chemistry, electricity, and mechanics, which consumed a large portion of his time and money. He conducted for some time, with success, a manufacturing process of which he was the inventor; but

after

after he had disclosed his secret to the gentleman at whose expence it was carried on, he was dismissed, without obtaining either a share in the business, or a suitable compensation for his services. He was the first in Scotland who adventured in a fire balloon, constructed upon the plan of Montgolfeir. He ascended from *Comely Garden*, Edinburgh, amidst the acclamations of an immense multitude, and descended at a distance of a quarter of a mile, owing to some unforeseen defect in the machinery. The failure of this adventure deprived him of the public favour and applause, and encreased his pecuniary difficulties. He again had recourse to his pen for subsistence, and amidst the drudgery of writing, and the cares which pressed upon him daily, he exhilarated his spirits, at intervals, with a tune on the Irish Bagpipe, which he played with much sweetness, interposing occasionally a song of his own composition, sung with great animation. A solace of this kind was well suited to the simplicity of his manners, the modesty of his disposition, and the integrity of his character, such as they were before he suffered his social propensities to violate the rules of sobriety. Forgetting his old friends, he associated with discontented persons, and entered into a deliberate exposition of the abuses of government in "*A pamphlet on the excise*," and more systematically in a periodical publication, entitled, "*The Historical Register*," which gratified malignity by personal invective and intemperance of language. He was concerned in the wild irrational plans of the British convention, and published "*A hand bill addressed to the people*," written in so inflammatory a style, as rendered him obnoxious to government. A warrant was issued to apprehend him, and he left his native country and crossed the Atlantic for America,

where

where he fixed his residence in the town of Salem, in the state of Massachusetts, where he established a newspaper in connection with a printer, which he continued till his death, which happened in the year 1805, in the 58th year of his age.

The editor cannot dismiss this note without acknowledging himself greatly obliged by the communications of Dr. Robert Anderson, of Edinburgh.

COMMON PLACE BOOK,

JOURNALS,

FRAGMENTS OF LETTERS,

MISCELLANEOUS

OBSERVATIONS, &c.

ROBERT BURNS's

COMMON PLACE, OR SCRAP BOOK,

BEGUN IN APRIL, 1783.*

"OBSERVATIONS, HINTS, SONGS, SCRAPS of POETRY, &c. by ROBERT BURNESS; a man who had little art in making money, and still less in keeping it; but was, however, a man of some sense,

* It has been the chief object in making this collection, not to omit any thing which might illustrate the character and feelings of the bard at different periods of his life.—Hence these "*Observations*" are given entire from his manuscript.—A small portion appears in Dr. Currie's edition, but the reader will pardon the repetition of it here when he considers how much so valuable a paper would lose by being given in fragments, and when he recollects that this volume may fall into the hands of those who have not the opportunity of referring to the large edition of the works.

This remark will apply equally to the *Journals* and other pieces of which parts have before been published.

E.

sense, a great deal of honesty, and unbounded good-will to every creature, rational and irrational.—As he was but little indebted to scholastic education, and bred at a plough-tail, his performances must be strongly tinctured with his unpolished, rustic way of life; but as I believe they are really *his own*, it may be some entertainment to a curious observer of human nature to see how a plough-man thinks, and feels, under the pressure of love, ambition, anxiety, grief, with the like cares and passions, which, however diversified by the *modes*, and *manners* of life, operate pretty much alike, I believe, on all the species.

"There are numbers in the world who do not want sense to make a figure, so much as an opinion of their own abilities to put them upon recording their observations, and allowing them the same importance which they do to those which appear in print."

Shenstone.

"Pleasing, when youth is long expired, to trace
The forms our pencil, or our pen designed!
Such was our youthful air, and shape, and face,
Such the soft image of our youthful mind."

Ibid.

Notwithstanding

April, 1783.

Notwithstanding all that has been said against love respecting the folly and weakness it leads a young inexperienced mind into; still I think it in a great measure deserves the highest encomiums that have been passed upon it. If any thing on earth deserves the name of rapture or transport it is the feelings of green eighteen in the company of the mistress of his heart, when she repays him with an equal return of affection.

. . . . . .

August.

There is certainly some connection between love, and music, and poetry; and therefore, I have always thought it a fine touch of nature, that passage in a modern love composition,

> " As tow'rds her cott he jogg'd along,
> Her name was frequent in his song."

For my own part I never had the least thought or inclination of turning poet till I got once heartily in love, and then rhyme and song were, in

in a manner the spontaneous language of my heart. The following composition was the first of my performances, and done at an early period of life, when my heart glowed with honest warm simplicity; unacquainted, and uncorrupted with the ways of a wicked world. The performance is, indeed, very puerile and silly; but I am always pleased with it, as it recals to my mind those happy days when my heart was yet honest, and my tongue was sincere. The subject of it was a young girl who really deserved all the praises I have bestowed on her. I not only had this opinion of her then—but I actually think so still, now that the spell is long since broken, and the enchantment at an end.

Tune—'I AM A MAN UNMARRIED.'

O once I lov'd a bonnie lass,
Ay, and I love her still,
And whilst that honor warms my breast
I'll love my handsome Nell.
Fal lal de ral, &c.

As bonnie lasses I hae seen,
And mony full as braw,
But for a modest gracefu' mien
The like I never saw.

A bonnie

A bonnie lass I will confess,
Is pleasant to the e'e,
But without some better qualities
She's no a lass for me.

But Nelly's looks are blythe and sweet,
And what is best of a',
Her reputation is complete,
And fair without a flaw.

She dresses ay sae clean and neat,
Both decent and genteel:
And then there's something in her gait
Gars ony dress look weel.

A gaudy dress and gentle air
May slightly touch the heart,
But it's innocence and modesty
That polishes the dart.

'Tis this in Nelly pleases me,
'Tis this enchants my soul;
For absolutely in my breast
She reigns without control.
Fal lal de ral, &c.

Criticism on the foregoing song.

Lest my works should be thought below criticism;

cism; or meet with a critic who, perhaps, will not look on them with so candid and favorable an eye; I am determined to criticise them myself.

The first distich of the first stanza is quite too much in the flimsy strain of our ordinary street ballads; and on the other hand, the second distich is too much in the other extreme. The expression is a little awkward, and the sentiment too serious. Stanza the second I am well pleased with; and I think it conveys a fine idea of that amiable part of the sex—the agreeables; or what in our Scotch dialect we call a *sweet sonsy lass.* The third stanza has a little of the flimsy turn in it; and the third line has rather too serious a cast. The fourth stanza is a very indifferent one; the first line is, indeed, all in the strain of the second stanza, but the rest is mostly expletive. The thoughts in the fifth stanza come finely up to my favorite idea—a *sweet sonsy lass:* the last line, however, halts a little. The same sentiments are kept up with equal spirit and tenderness in the sixth stanza; but the second and fourth lines ending with short syllables hurt the whole. The seventh stanza has several minute faults; but I remember I composed it in a wild enthusiasm of passion, and to this hour I never recollect it, but my heart

heart melts, my blood sallies at the remembrance.

. . . . . .

September.

I entirely agree with that judicious philosopher, Mr. Smith, in his excellent *Theory of Moral Sentiments*, that remorse is the most painful sentiment that can embitter the human bosom. Any ordinary pitch of fortitude may bear up tolerably well under those calamities, in the procurement of which we ourselves have had no hand; but when our own follies, or crimes, have made us miserable and wretched, to bear up with manly firmness, and at the same time have a proper penitential sense of our misconduct, is a glorious effort of self-command.

Of all the numerous ills that hurt our peace,
That press the soul, or wring the mind with anguish,
Beyond comparison the worst are those
That to our folly or our guilt we owe.
In every other circumstance, the mind
Has this to say—"It was no deed of mine;"
But when to all the evil of misfortune
This sting is added—"Blame thy foolish self!"

Or

Or worser far, the pangs of keen remorse;
The torturing, gnawing consciousness of guilt—
Of guilt, perhaps, where we've involved others;
The young, the innocent, who fondly lov'd us,
Nay, more, that very love their cause of ruin!
O burning hell! in all thy store of torments,
There's not a keener lash!
Lives there a man so firm, who, while his heart
Feels all the bitter horrors of his crime,
Can reason down its agonizing throbs;
And, after proper purpose of amendment,
Can firmly force his jarring thoughts to peace?
O, happy! happy! enviable man!
O glorious magnanimity of soul!

. . . . . .

March, 1784.

I have often observed, in the course of my experience of human life, that every man, even the worst, has something good about him; though very often nothing else than a happy temperament of constitution inclining him to this or that virtue. For this reason, no man can say in what degree any other person, besides himself, can be, with strict justice, called *wicked*. Let any of the strictest character for regularity of conduct among us, examine impartially

partially how many vices he has never been guilty of, not from any care or vigilance, but for want of opportunity, or some accidental circumstance intervening; how many of the weaknesses of mankind he has escaped, because he was out of the line of such temptation; and, what often, if not always, weighs more than all the rest, how much he is indebted to the world's good opinion, because the world does not know all: I say, any man who can thus think, will scan the failings, nay, the faults and crimes, of mankind around him, with a brother's eye.

I have often courted the acquaintance of that part of mankind commonly known by the ordinary phrase of *blackguards*, sometimes farther than was consistent with the safety of my character; those who, by thoughtless prodigality or headstrong passions, have been driven to ruin. Though disgraced by follies, nay sometimes "stained with guilt, * * * * * * * *," I have yet found among them, in not a few instances, some of the noblest virtues, magnanimity, generosity, disinterested friendship, and even modesty.

As I am what the men of the world, if they knew such a man, would call a whimsical mortal, I have various sources of pleasure and enjoyment, which are, in a manner, *peculiar* to myself, or some here and there such other out-of-the-way person. Such is the peculiar pleasure I take in the season of winter, more than the rest of the year. This I believe, may be partly owing to my misfortunes giving my mind a melancholy cast: but there is something even in the

> "Mighty tempest, and the hoary waste
> Abrupt and deep, stretch'd o'er the buried earth,"—

which raises the mind to a serious sublimity, favorable to every thing great and noble. There is scarcely any earthly object gives me more—I do not know if I should call it pleasure—but something which exalts me, something which enraptures me—than to walk in the sheltered side of a wood, or high plantation, in a cloudy winter-day, and hear the stormy wind howling among the trees, and raving over the plain. It is my best season for devotion: my mind is wrapt up in a kind of

enthusiasm

enthusiasm to *Him*, who, in the pompous language of the Hebrew bard, "walks on the wings of the wind." In one of these seasons, just after a train of misfortunes, I composed the following:

The wint'ry west extends his blast,
And hail and rain does blaw;
Or, the stormy north sends driving forth
The blinding sleet and snaw:
While tumbling brown, the burn comes down,
An' roars frae bank to brae;
And bird and beast in covert rest,
And pass the heartless day.

"The sweeping blast, the sky o'ercast,"*
The joyless winter-day,
Let others fear, to me more dear
Than all the pride of May:
The tempest's howl, it soothes my soul,
My griefs it seems to join,
The leafless trees my fancy please,
Their fate resembles mine!

Thou

* Dr. Young.

Thou *Pow'r Supreme*, whose mighty scheme
These woes of mine fulfil,
Here, firm, I rest, they must be best,
Because they are *Thy* will!
Then all I want (O, do thou grant
This one request of mine!)
Since to *enjoy* thou dost deny,
Assist me to *resign*.

* * * * *

Shenstone finely observes, that love-verses, writ without any real passion, are the most nauseous of all conceits; and I have often thought that no man can be a proper critic of love-composition, except he himself, in one or more instances, have been a warm votary of this passion. As I have been all along a miserable dupe to love, and have been led into a thousand weaknesses and follies by it, for that reason I put the more confidence in my critical skill, in distinguishing foppery and conceit, from real passion and nature. Whether the following song will stand the test, I will not pretend to say, because it is my own; only I can say it was, at the time, genuine from the heart.

Behind

Behind yon hills where Lugar flows,
'Mang moors an' mosses many, O,
The wint'ry sun the day has clos'd,
And I'll awa to Nannie, O.

The westlin wind blaws loud an shrill;
The night's baith mirk and rainy, O,
But I'll get my plaid an' out I'll steal,
An' owre the hills to Nannie, O.

My Nannie's charming, sweet, an' young;
Nae artfu' wiles to win ye, O:
May ill befa' the flattering tongue
That wad beguile my Nannie, O.

Her face is fair, her heart is true,
As spotless as she's bonnie, O;
The op'ning gowan, wet wi' dew,
Nae purer is than Nannie, O.

A country lad is my degree,
An' few there be that ken me, O;
But what care I how few they be,
I'm welcome ay to Nannie, O.

My riches a's my penny-fee,
An' I maun guide it cannie, O;
But warl's gear ne'er troubles me,
My thoughts are a' my Nannie, O.

Our

Our auld guidman delights to view
His sheep an' kye thrive bonnie, O;
But I'm as blythe that hauds his pleugh,
An' has nae care but Nannie, O.

Come weel come woe, I care na by,
I'll tak what Heav'n will sen' me, O;
Nae ither care in life have I,
But live, an' love my Nannie, O.

. . . . . .

March, 1784.

There was a certain period of my life that my spirit was broke by repeated losses and disasters, which threatened, and indeed effected, the utter ruin of my fortune. My body too was attacked by that most dreadful distemper, a hypochondria, or confirmed melancholy: In this wretched state, the recollection of which makes me yet shudder, I hung my harp on the willow trees, except in some lucid intervals, in one of which I composed the following—

O THOU Great Being! what thou art
Surpasses me to know;
Yet sure I am, that known to thee
Are all thy works below.

Thy

Thy creature here before thee stands,
All wretched and distrest;
Yet sure those ills that wring my soul
Obey thy high behest.

Sure Thou, Almighty, canst not act
From cruelty or wrath;
O, free my weary eyes from tears,
Or close them fast in death!

But if I must afflicted be,
To suit some wise design;
Then man my soul with firm resolves
To bear and not repine!

. . . . . .

April.

The following song is a wild rhapsody, miserably deficient in versification, but as the sentiments are the genuine feelings of my heart, for that reason I have a particular pleasure in conning it over.

SONG.

Tune, *The Weaver and his Shuttle, O.*

My Father was a Farmer upon the Carrick border, O
And carefully he bred me in decency and order, O
He bade me act a manly part, though I had ne'er a farthing, O
For without an honest manly heart, no man was worth regarding, O.

Then out into the world my course I did determine, O
Tho' to be rich was not my wish, yet to be great was charming, O
My talents they were not the worst; nor yet my education: O
Resolv'd was I, at least to try, to mend my situation, O.

In many a way, and vain essay, I courted fortune's favor; O
Some cause unseen, still stept between, to frustrate each endeavour; O
Sometimes by foes I was o'erpower'd; sometimes by friends forsaken; O
And when my hope was at the top, I still was worst mistaken, O.

Then

Then sore harrass'd, and tir'd at last, with fortune's vain delusion; O
I dropt my schemes, like idle dreams, and came to this conclusion; O
The past was bad, and the future hid; its good or ill untryed; O
But the present hour was in my pow'r, and so I would enjoy it, O.

No help, nor hope, nor view had I; nor person to befriend me; O
So I must toil, and sweat and broil, and labor to sustain me, O
To plough and sow, to reap and mow, my father bred me early; O
For one, he said, to labor bred, was a match for fortune fairly, O.

Thus all obscure, unknown, and poor, thro' life I'm doom'd to wander, O
Till down my weary bones I lay in everlasting slumber: O
No view nor care, but shun whate'er might breed me pain or sorrow; O
I live to day, as well's I may, regardless of to-morrow, O.

But chearful still, I am as well, as a monarch in a palace, O
Tho' fortune's frown still hunts me down, with all her wonted malice; O
I make indeed, my daily bread, but ne'er can make it farther; O
But as daily bread is all I need, I do not much regard her, O.

When sometimes by my labor I earn a little money, O
Some unforeseen misfortune comes generally upon me; O
Mischance, mistake, or by neglect, or my good-natur'd folly; O
But come what will, I've sworn it still, I'll ne'er be melancholy, O.

All you who follow wealth and power with unremitting ardor, O
The more in this you look for bliss, you leave your view the farther; O
Had you the wealth Potosi boasts, or nations to adore you, O
A chearful honest hearted clown I will prefer before you, O.

I think

April.

I think the whole species of young men may be naturally enough divided into two grand classes, which I shall call the *grave* and the *merry;* though, by the bye, these terms do not with propriety enough express my ideas. The grave I shall cast into the usual division of those who are goaded on by the love of money, and those whose darling wish is to make a figure in the world. The merry are the men of pleasure of all denominations; the jovial lads, who have too much fire and spirit to have any settled rule of action; but, without much deliberation, follow the strong impulses of nature: the thoughtless, the careless, the indolent—in particular *he*, who, with a happy sweetness of natural temper, and a chearful vacancy of thought, steals through life—generally, indeed, in poverty and obscurity; but poverty and obscurity are only evils to him who can sit gravely down and make a repining comparison between his own situation and that of others; and lastly, to grace the quorum, such are, generally, those whose heads are capable of all the towerings of genius, and whose hearts are warmed with all the delicacy of feeling.

August.

The foregoing was to have been an elaborate dissertation on the various species of men; but

as

as I cannot please myself in the arrangement of my ideas, I must wait till farther experience, and nicer observation, throw more light on the subject.——In the mean time I shall set down the following fragment, which, as it is the genuine language of my heart, will enable any body to determine which of the classes I belong to.

Green grow the rashes, O,
Green grow the rashes, O,
The sweetest hours that e'er I spent,
Are spent amang the lasses, O.

There's nought but care on ev'ry han',
In ev'ry hour that passes, O;
What signifies the life o' man,
An' 'twere na for the lasses, O.

The warly race may riches chase,
An' riches still may fly them, O;
An' tho' at last they catch them fast,
Their hearts can ne'er enjoy them, O.

But gie me a canny hour at e'en,
My arms about my dearie, O;
An' warly cares, an' warly men,
May a' gae tapsalteerie, O!

For

For you sae douse, ye sneer at this,
Ye're nought but senseless asses, O;
The wisest man the warl' e'er saw,
He dearly lov'd the lasses, O!

Auld Nature swears, the lovely dears
Her noblest work she classes, O;
Her prentice han' she try'd on man,
An' then she made the lasses, O!
Green grow the rashes, O, &c.

As the grand end of human life is to cultivate an intercourse with that BEING to whom we owe life, with every enjoyment that renders life delightful; and to maintain an integritive conduct towards our fellow creatures; that so, by forming piety and virtue into habit, we may be fit members for that society of the pious, and the good, which reason and revelation teach us to expect beyond the grave—I do not see that the turn of mind, and pursuits of such a one as the above verses describe—one who spends the hours and thoughts which the vocations of the day can spare, with Ossian, Shakespeare, Thomson, Shenstone, Sterne, &c.; or as the maggot takes him, a gun, a fiddle, or a song to make or mend; and at all times some heart's-dear bonie lass in view—I say I do not see that the turn of mind and pursuits of such a one are in the least more inimical to the sacred interests of

piety

piety and virtue, than the, even lawful, bustling and straining after the world's riches and honors: and I do not see but he may gain heaven as well, which, by the bye, is no mean consideration, who steals thro' the vale of life, amusing himself with every little flower that fortune throws in his way; as he who straining straight forward, and perhaps spattering all about him, gains some of life's little eminences, where, after all, he can only see and be seen a little more conspicuously, than what in the pride of his heart, he is apt to term the poor, indolent devil he has left behind him.

. . . . . .

August.

A prayer, when fainting fits, and other alarming symptoms of a pleurisy or some other dangerous disorder, which indeed still threatens me, first put nature on the alarm.

O THOU unknown, Almighty Cause
Of all my hope and fear!
In whose dread presence, ere an hour,
Perhaps I must appear.

If

If I have wander'd in those paths
Of life I ought to shun;
As *something*, loudly, in my breast,
Remonstrates I have done;

Thou know'st that Thou hast formed me
With passions wild and strong;
And list'ning to their witching voice
Has often led me wrong.

Where human *weakness* has come short,
Or *frailty* stept aside,
Do thou, *All Good!* for such thou art,
In shades of darkness hide.

Where with *intention* I have err'd,
No other plea I have,
But, *Thou art good;* and goodness still
Delighteth to forgive.

. . . . . .

August.

Misgivings in the hour of *despondency* and prospect of death.

Why

Why am I loth to leave this earthly scene!
Have I so found it full of pleasing charms!
Some drops of joy with draughts of ill between:
Some gleams of sunshine 'mid renewing storms:
Is it departing pangs my soul alarms?
Or death's unlovely, dreary, dark abode?
For guilt, for guilt, my terrors are in arms;
I tremble to approach an angry GOD,
And justly smart beneath his sin-avenging rod,

Fain would I say, 'Forgive my foul offence!'
Fain promise never more to disobey;
But, should my author health again dispense,
Again I might desert fair virtue's way;
Again in folly's path might go astray;
Again exalt the brute and sink the man;
Then how should I for heavenly mercy pray,
Who act so counter heavenly mercy's plan?
Who sin so oft have mourn'd yet to temptation ran?

O Thou, great governor of all below!
If I may dare a lifted eye to Thee,
Thy nod can make the tempest cease to blow,
Or still the tumult of the raging sea;
With that controling pow'r assist ev'n me,
Those headlong furious passions to confine;
For all unfit I feel my powers to be,
To rule their torrent in th' allowed line,
O, aid me with thy help, *Omnipotence Divine!*

Egotisms *from my own Sensations.*

May.

I don't well know what is the reason of it, but some how or other though I am, when I have a mind, pretty generally beloved; yet, I never could get the art of commanding respect.*—I imagine it is owing to my being deficient in what Sterne calls "that understrapping virtue of discretion."

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* There is no doubt that if Burns at any time really laboured under this infirmity, he was successful in enquiring into its causes, and also in his efforts to amend it. When he was at a later period of life, introduced into the superior circles of society, he did not appear then as a cypher, nor did he by any violation of the dictates of common sense, give any occasion, even to those who were superciliously disposed to look upon him with contempt. On the contrary, he was conscious of his own moral and intellectual worth, and never abated an inch of his just claims to due consideration. The following extract of a letter from his great and good biographer, who was an excellent judge of human character, bears an honorable testimony to the habitual firmness, decision, and independence of his mind, which constitute the only solid basis of respectability.

"Burns was a very singular man in the strength and variety of his faculties.—I saw him, and once only, in the year 1792.

cretion."—I am so apt to a *lapsus linguæ*, that I sometimes think the character of a certain great man, I have read of somewhere, is very much *apropos* to myself—that he was a compound of great talents and great folly. N. B. To try if I can discover the causes of this wretched infirmity, and, if possible, to mend it.

. . . . . .

SONG.

Tho' cruel fate should bid us part,
As far's the pole and line;
Her dear idea round my heart
Should tenderly entwine.

Tho' mountains frown and desarts howl,
And oceans roar between;
Yet, dearer than my deathless soul,
I still would love my Jean.

. . . . . .

FRAGMENT.

1792. We conversed together for about an hour in the street of Dumfries, and engaged in some very animated conversation—We differed in our sentiments sufficiently to be rather vehemently engaged—and this interview gave me a more lively as well as forcible impression of his talents than any part of his writings.—He was a great ORATOR,—an original and very versatile genius."

3d October, 1799.

FRAGMENT.

Tune, *John Anderson my Jo.*

One night as I did wander,
When corn begins to shoot,
I sat me down to ponder,
Upon an auld tree root:
Auld Aire ran by before me,
And bicker'd to the seas;
A cushat* crouded o'er me
That echoed thro' the braes.

. . . . . .

FRAGMENT.

Tune, *Daintie Davie.*

There was a lad was born in Kyle,†
But what na day o' what na style
I doubt its hardly worth the while
To be sae nice wi' *Robin.*

Robin was a rovin' Boy,
Rantin' rovin', rantin' rovin';
Robin was a rovin' Boy,
Rantin' rovin' Robin.

Our

* The dove, or wild pigeon.

† *Kyle*—a district of Ayrshire.

Our monarch's hindmost year but ane
Was five and twenty days begun,
'Twas then a blast o'Janwar Win'
Blew hansel in on *Robin.*

The gossip keckit in his loof,
Quo' scho wha lives will see the proof,
This waly boy will be nae coof,
I think we'll ca' him *Robin.*

He'll hae misfortunes great and sma',
But ay a heart aboon them a';
He'll be a credit 'till us a',
We'll a' be proud o' *Robin.*

But sure as three times three mak nine,
I see by ilka score and line,
This chap will dearly like our kin',
So leeze me on thee *Robin.*

Guid faith quo' scho I doubt you Sir,
Ye gar the lasses * * * *
But twenty fauts ye may hae waur
So blessin's on thee, *Robin!*
Robin was a rovin' Boy,
Rantin' rovin', rantin' rovin';
Robin was a rovin' Boy,
Rantin' rovin' Robin.

Elegy

*On the Death of Robert Ruisseaux.**

Now Robin lies in his last lair,
He'll gabble rhyme, nor sing nae mair,
Cauld poverty, wi' hungry stare,
Nae mair shall fear him;
Nor anxious fear, nor cankert care
E'er mair come near him.

To tell the truth, they seldom fash't him,
Except the moment that they crush't him;
For sune as chance or fate had husht 'em
Tho' e'er sae short,
Then wi' a rhyme or song he lasht 'em,
And thought it sport.—

Tho' he was bred to kintra wark,
And counted was baith wight and stark,
Yet that was never Robin's mark
To mak a man;
But tell him, he was learn'd and clark,
Ye roos'd him then!†

August.

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* *Ruisseaux*—a play on his own name.
† *Ye roos'd*—ye prais'd.

However I am pleased with the works of our Scotch poets, particularly the excellent Ramsay, and the still more excellent Fergusson, yet I am hurt to see other places of Scotland, their towns, rivers, woods, haughs, &c. immortalized in such celebrated performances, while my dear native country, the ancient bailieries of Carrick, Kyle, and Cunningham, famous both in ancient and modern times for a gallant and warlike race of inhabitants; a country where civil, and particularly religious liberty have ever found their first support, and their last asylum; a country, the birth-place of many famous philosophers, soldiers, and statesmen, and the scene of many important events recorded in Scottish history, particularly a great many of the actions of the glorious WALLACE, the SAVIOUR of his country; yet, we have never had one Scotch poet of any eminence; to make the fertile banks of Irvine, the romantic woodlands and sequestered scenes on Aire, and the healthy mountainous source, and winding sweep of DOON, emulate Tay, Forth, Ettrick, Tweed, &c. This is a complaint I would gladly remedy, but alas! I am far unequal to the task, both in native

tive genius and education.* Obscure I am, and obscure I must be, though no young poet, nor young

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* This kind of feeling appears to have animated the poet's bosom at a very early period of his life. In a poetical epistle addressed to "Mrs. Scott, of Wauchope House," dated March, 1787, he alludes to the sensations of his early days in the following tender strain of sentiment.

GUIDWIFE,

I mind it weel, in early date,
When I was beardless, young and blate,
An' first could thresh the barn,
Or haud a yokin at the pleugh,
An' tho' fu' foughten sair eneugh,
Yet unco proud to learn.

Ev'n then a wish (I mind its power)
A wish, that to my latest hour
Shall strongly heave my breast;
That I for poor auld Scotland's sake,
Some useful plan, or beuk could make,
Or sing a song at least.

The rough bur-thistle spreading wide
Amang the bearded bear,
I turned my weeding heuk aside,
An' spar'd the symbol dear.

* * * *

young soldier's heart, ever beat more fondly for fame than mine—

And if there is no other scene of being
Where my insatiate wish may have its fill;—
This something at my heart that heaves for room,
My best, my dearest part was made in vain.—

. . . . . .

Aug.

A Fragment. *Tune*—I HAD A HORSE AND I HAD NAE MAIR.

When first I came to Stewart Kyle,
My mind it was nae steady,
Where'er I gaed, where'er I rade
A mistress still I had ay:

But when I came roun' by Mauchline town,
Not dreadin' any body,
My heart was caught before I thought,
And by a Mauchline lady.

. . . . . .

Sept.

There is a great irregularity in the old Scotch songs,

songs, a redundancy of syllables with respect to that exactness of accent and measure that the English poetry requires, but which glides in, most melodiously, with the respective tunes to which they are set. For instance, the fine old song of *The Mill, Mill, O*, to give it a plain prosaic reading it halts prodigiously out of measure; on the other hand, the song set to the same tune in Bremner's collection of Scotch songs, which begins "*To Fanny fair could I impart, &c*," it is most exact measure, and yet, let them both be sung before a real critic, one above the biasses of prejudice, but a thorough judge of nature,—how flat and spiritless will the last appear, how trite, and lamely methodical, compared with the wild-warbling cadence, the heart-moving melody of the first.—This is particularly the case with all those airs which end with a hypermetrical syllable. There is a degree of wild irregularity in many of the compositions and fragments which are daily sung to them by my compeers, the common people—a certain happy arrangement of old Scotch syllables, and yet, very frequently, nothing, not even *like* Rhyme, or sameness of jingle, at the ends of the lines. This has made me sometimes imagine that, perhaps it might be possible for a Scotch poet, with a nice judicious ear, to set compositions to many of our most favourite airs,

particularly that class of them mentioned above, independent of rhyme altogether.

. . . . . .

There is a noble sublimity, a heart-melting tenderness, in some of our ancient ballads, which shew them to be the work of a masterly hand: and it has often given me many a heart-ache to reflect, that such glorious old bards—bards who very probably owed all their talents to native genius, yet have described the exploits of heroes, the pangs of disappointment, and the meltings of love, with such fine strokes of nature—that their very names (O how mortifying to a bard's vanity!) are now "buried among the wreck of things which were."

O ye illustrious names unknown! who could feel so strongly and describe so well; the last, the meanest of the muses train—one who, though far inferior to your flights, yet eyes your path, and with trembling wing would sometimes soar after you—a poor rustic bard unknown, pays this sympathetic pang to your memory! Some of you tell us, with all the charms of verse, that you have been unfortunate in the world—unfortunate in love: *he* too has felt the loss of his little fortune, the loss of friends,

and,

and, worse than all, the loss of the woman he adored. Like you, all his consolation was his muse: she taught him in rustic measures to complain. Happy could he have done it with your strength of imagination and flow of verse! May the turf lie lightly on your bones! and may you now enjoy that solace and rest which this world rarely gives to the heart tuned to all the feelings of poesy and love.

. . . . . .

Sept.

The following fragment is done,* something in imitation of the manner of a noble old Scottish piece called M'Millan's Peggy, and sings to the tune of Galla Water.—My Montgomerie's Peggy was my deity for six or eight months. She had been bred, (tho' as the world says, without any just pretence for it,) in a style of life rather elegant—but as Vanburgh says in one of his comedies, My "d——d star found me out" there too; for though I began the affair merely in a *gaieté de cœur*, or to tell the truth, which will scarcely be believed, a vanity of shewing my parts in courtship, particularly my abilities at a *Billet-doux*, which I always piqued myself

* This passage explains the love letters to Peggy.

self upon, made me lay siege to her; and when, as I always do in my foolish gallantries, I had battered myself into a very warm affection for her, she told me, one day, in a flag of truce, that her fortress had been for some time before the rightful property of another; but, with the greatest friendship and politeness, she offered me every alliance except actual possession. I found out afterwards that what she told me of a pre-engagement was really true; but it cost me some heartachs to get rid of the affair.

I have even tried to imitate, in this extempore thing, that irregularity in the rhyme, which, when judiciously done, has such a fine effect on the ear.—

Fragment.—*Tune* GALLAWATER.

Altho' my bed were in yon muir,
Amang the heather, in my plaidie,
Yet happy, happy would I be
Had I my dear Montgomerie's Peggy.—

When o'er the hill beat surly storms,
And winter nights were dark and rainy;
I'd seek some dell, and in my arms
I'd shelter dear Montgomerie's Peggy.—

Were I a Baron proud and high,
And horse and servants waiting ready,
Then a' 'twad gie o' joy to me,
The sharin't with Montgomerie's Peggy.—

. . . . . .

September.

There is another fragment in imitation of an old Scotch song, well known among the country ingle sides.—I cannot tell the name, neither of the song nor the tune, but they are in fine unison with one another.—By the way, these old Scottish airs are so nobly sentimental, that when one would compose to them; to *south the tune*, as our Scotch phrase is, over and over, is the readiest way to catch the inspiration and raise the bard into that glorious enthusiasm so strongly characteristic of our old Scotch poetry. I shall here set down one verse of the piece mentioned above, both to mark the song and tune I mean, and likewise as a debt I owe to the author, as the repeating of that verse has lighted up my flame a thousand times.—

"When clouds in skies do come together
To hide the brightness of the sun,
There will surely be some pleasant weather
When a' their storms are past and gone."—*

Though

* Alluding to the misfortunes he feelingly laments before this verse. *(This is the author's note.)*

Though fickle fortune has deceiv'd me,
She promis'd fair and perform'd but ill;
Of mistress, friends, and wealth bereav'd me,
Yet I bear a heart shall support me still.—

I'll act with prudence as far's I'm able,
But if success I must never find,
Then come misfortune, I bid thee welcome,
I'll meet thee with an undaunted mind.—

The above was an extempore, under the pressure of a heavy train of misfortunes, which, indeed, threatened to undo me altogether. It was just at the close of that dreadful period mentioned page viii.;* and though the weather has brightened up a little with me, yet there has always been since a tempest brewing round me in the grim sky of futurity, which I pretty plainly see will some time or other, perhaps ere long, overwhelm me, and drive me into some doleful dell, to pine in solitary, squalid wretchedness.—However, as I hope my poor country muse, who, all rustic, awkward, and unpolished as she is, has more charms for me than any other of the pleasures of life beside—as I hope she will not then desert me, I may even then, learn to be, if

* Of the original MS. see the remark, March, 1784, beginning, *"There was a certain period," &c.*

if not happy, at least easy, and *south a sang* to sooth my misery.

'Twas at the same time I set about composing an air in the old Scotch style.—I am not musical scholar enough to prick down my tune properly, so it can never see the light, and perhaps 'tis no great matter, but the following were the verses I composed to suit it:

O raging fortune's withering blast
Has laid my leaf full low! O
O raging fortune's withering blast
Has laid my leaf full low! O.
My stem was fair, my bud was green,
My blossom sweet did blow; O
The dew fell fresh, the sun rose mild,
And made my branches grow; O
But luckless fortune's northern storms
Laid a' my blossoms low, O
But luckless fortune's northern storms
Laid a' my blossoms low, O.

The tune consisted of three parts, so that the above verses just went through the whole air.

October, 1785.

If ever any young man, in the vestibule of the world, chance to throw his eye over these pages, let him pay a warm attention to the following observations; as I assure him they are the fruit of a poor devil's dear-bought experience.—I have, literally, like that great poet and great gallant, and by consequence, that great fool, Solomon,—"turned my eyes to behold madness and folly."—Nay, I have, with all the ardor of a lively, fanciful, and whimsical imagination, accompanied with a warm, feeling, poetic heart—shaken hands with their intoxicating friendship.

In the first place, let my pupil, as he tenders his own peace, keep up a regular, warm intercourse with the deity. * * * * * * * (Here the MSS. abruptly closes.

FRAGMENTS,

MISCELLANEOUS REMARKS,

&c.

"Every single observation that is published by a man of genius, be it ever so trivial, should be esteemed of importance; because he speaks from his own impressions: whereas common men publish common things, which they have perhaps gleaned from frivolous writers."

Shenstone.

I Like to have quotations for every occasion: They give one's ideas so pat, and save one the trouble of finding expression adequate to one's feelings. I think it is one of the greatest pleasures attending a poetic genius, that we can give our woes, cares, joys, loves, &c. an embodied form in verse; which, to me, is ever immediate ease. Goldsmith says finely of his muse—

"Thou source of all my bliss and all my woe;
That found'st me poor at first, and keep'st me so."

What a creature is man! A little alarm last

last night, and to-day, that I am mortal, has made such a revolution on my spirits! There is no philosophy, no divinity, that comes half so much home to the mind. I have no idea of courage that braves Heaven: 'Tis the wild ravings of an imaginary hero in Bedlam.

My favorite feature in Milton's Satan is, his manly fortitude in supporting what cannot be remedied—in short, the wild, broken fragments of a noble, exalted mind in ruins. I meant no more by saying he was a favorite hero of mine.

I am just risen from a two-hours bout after supper, with silly or sordid souls, who could relish nothing in common with me—but the port. "One."—'Tis now "witching time of night;" and whatever is out of joint in the foregoing scrawl, impute it to enchantments and spells; for I can't look over it, but will seal it up directly, as I don't care for to-morrow's criticisms on it.

We ought, when we wish to be economists in happiness; we ought, in the first place, to fix the

the standard of our own character; and when, on full examination, we know where we stand, and how much ground we occupy, let us contend for it as property; and those who seem to doubt, or deny us what is justly ours, let us either pity their prejudices, or despise their judgment.

I know you will say this is self-conceit; but I call it self-knowledge: the one is the overweening opinion of a fool, who fancies himself to be, what he wishes himself to be thought: the other is the honest justice that a man of sense, who has thoroughly examined the subject, owes to himself. Without this standard, this column, in our mind, we are perpetually at the mercy of the petulance, the mistakes, the prejudices, nay the very weakness and wickedness of our fellow-creatures.

Away, then, with disquietudes! Let us pray with the honest weaver of Kilbarchan, "L—d send us a güde conceit o' oursel!" Or in the words of the auld sang;

"Who does me disdain, I can scorn them again,
And I'll never mind any such foes."

Your thoughts on religion shall be welcome.

You may perhaps distrust me when I say 'tis also *my* favorite topic; but mine is the religion of the bosom. I hate the very idea of a controversial divinity; as I firmly believe that every honest, upright man, of whatever sect, will be accepted of the deity. I despise the superstition of a fanatic, but I love the religion of a man.

Why have I not heard from you? To-day I well expected it; and before supper, when a letter to me was announced, my heart danced with rapture: but behold! 'twas some fool who had taken it into his head to turn poet; and made me an offering of the first fruits of his nonsense.

I believe there is no holding converse, or carrying on correspondence, with an amiable fine woman, without some mixture of that delicious passion, whose most devoted slave I have more than once had the honor of being: but why be hurt or offended on that account? Can no honest man have a prepossession for a fine woman, but he must run his head against an intrigue? Take a little of the tender witchcraft of love, and add to it the generous, the honorable sentiments of manly friendship; and I know but

one more delightful morsel, which few, few in any rank ever taste. Such a composition is like adding cream to strawberries—it not only gives the fruit a more elegant richness, but has a peculiar deliciousness of its own.

Nothing astonishes me more, when a little sickness clogs the wheel of life, than the thoughtless career we run in the hour of health. "None saith, where is God, my maker, "that giveth songs in the night: who teacheth "us more knowledge than the beasts of the "field, and more understanding than the fowls "of the air."

I had a letter from my old friend a while ago, but it was so dry, so distant, so like a card to one of his clients, that I could scarce bear to read it. He is a good, honest fellow; and can write a friendly letter, which would do equal honor to his head and his heart, as a whole sheaf of his letters I have by me will witness; and though Fame does not blow her trumpet at my approach *now*, as she did *then*, when he first

first honored me with his friendship,* yet I am as proud as ever; and when I am laid in my grave, I wish to be stretched at my full length, that I may occupy every inch of ground which I have a right to.

You would laugh, were you to see me where I am just now:—Here am I set, a solitary hermit, in the solitary room of a solitary inn, with a solitary bottle of wine by me—as grave and as stupid as an owl—but like that owl, still faithful to my old song; in confirmation of which, my dear * * * * here is your good health! May the hand-wal'd bennisons o' heaven bless your bonie face; and the wratch wha skellies at your weelfare, may the auld tinkler deil get him to clout his rotten heart! Amen!

I mentioned to you my letter to Dr. Moore, giving an account of my life: it is truth, every word of it; and will give you the just idea of a man whom you have honored with your friendship. I wish you to see me *as I am*. I am, as most people of my trade are, a strange

Will

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* Alluding to the time of his first appearance in Edinburgh.

Will o' Wisp being, the victim, too frequently, of much imprudence and many follies. My great constituent elements are pride and passion. The first I have endeavoured to humanize into integrity and honor; the last makes me a devotee to the warmest degree of enthusiasm, in love, religion, or friendship; either of them, or altogether, as I happen to be inspired.

What trifling silliness is the childish fondness of the every-day children of the world! 'Tis the unmeaning toying of the younglings of the fields and forests: but where sentiment and fancy unite their sweets; where taste and delicacy refine; where wit adds the flavor, and good sense gives strength and spirit to all, what a delicious draught is the hour of tender endearment!—beauty and grace in the arms of truth and honor, in all the luxury of mutual love!

——— Innocence
Looks gaily-smiling on; while rosy pleasure
Hides young desire amid her flowery wreath,
And pours her cup luxuriant; mantling high
The sparkling heavenly vintage, Love and Bliss!

Those

Those of either sex, but particularly the female, who are lukewarm in that most important of all things, religion—" O my soul, come not " thou into their secret!" I will lay before you the outlines of my belief. He, who is our author and preserver, and will one day be our judge, must be, (not for his sake in the way of duty, but from the native impulse of our hearts,) the object of our reverential awe, and grateful adoration: He is almighty and all-bounteous; we are weak and dependent: hence, prayer and every other sort of devotion.——" He is not " willing that any should perish, but that all " should come to everlasting life;" consequently it must be in every one's power to embrace his offer of " everlasting life;" otherwise he could not, in justice, condemn those who did not. A mind pervaded, actuated and governed by purity, truth and charity, though it does not *merit* heaven, yet is an absolutely necessary prerequisite, without which heaven can neither be obtained nor enjoyed; and, by divine promise, such a mind shall never fail of attaining " ever- " lasting life:" hence, the impure, the deceiving, and the uncharitable, exclude themselves from eternal bliss, by their unfitness for enjoying it. The Supreme Being has put the immediate administration of all this, for wise and good ends known to himself, into the hands of

Jesus

Jesus Christ, a great personage, whose relation to him we cannot comprehend; but whose relation to us is a Guide and Saviour; and who, except for our own obstinacy and misconduct, will bring us all, through various ways, and by various means, to bliss at last.

These are my tenets, my friend. My creed is pretty nearly expressed in the last clause of *Jamie Dean*'s grace, an honest weaver in Ayrshire; "Lord grant that we may lead a gude "life! for a gude life maks a gude end, at least "it helps weel!"

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*A Mother's Address to her Infant.**

My blessins upon thy sweet, wee lippie!
My blessins upon thy bonie e'e brie!
Thy smiles are sae like my blythe sodger laddie,
Thou's ay the dearer, and dearer to me!

I am

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* These tender lines were added by the Poet, to old words that he had collected, of a song called *Bonie Dundee*, which appeared for the first time in print in the *Musical Museum*. E.

I am an odd being: some yet unnamed feelings, things, not principles, but better than whims, carry me farther than boasted reason ever did a philosopher.

There's naethin like the honest nappy!
Whaur'll ye e'er see men sae happy,
Or women sonsie, saft an' sappy,
'Tween morn an' morn,
As them wha like to taste the drappie
In glass or horn.

I've seen me daez't upon a time;
I scarce could wink or see a styme;
Just ae hauf muchkin does me prime,
Ought less is little,
Then back I rattle on the rhyme
As gleg's a whittle!

Coarse minds are not aware how much they injure the keenly-feeling tie of bosom-friendship, when in their foolish officiousness, they mention what nobody cares for recollecting. People of nice sensibility, and generous minds, have a certain

tain intrinsic dignity, that fires at being trifled with, or lowered, or even too nearly approached.

Some days, some nights, nay some *hours*, like the " ten righteous persons in Sodom," save the rest of the vapid, tiresome, miserable months and years of life.

To be feelingly alive to kindness and to unkindness, is a charming female character.

I have a little infirmity in my disposition, that where I fondly love or highly esteem, I cannot bear reproach.

If I have robbed you of a friend, God forgive me: But be comforted: let us raise the tone of our feelings a little higher and bolder. A fellow-creature who leaves us, who spurns us without

out just cause, though once our bosom friend—up with a little honest pride—let him go!

A decent means of livelihood in the world, an approving God, a peaceful conscience, and one firm trusty friend; can any body that has these, be said to be unhappy?

The dignified and dignifying consciousness of an honest man, and the well grounded trust in approving heaven, are two most substantial sources of happiness.

Give me, my Maker, to remember thee! Give me to feel "another's woe;" and continue with me that dear-lov'd friend that feels with mine!

Your religious sentiments I revere. If you have on some suspicious evidence, from some lying oracle, learned that I despise or ridicule so sacredly

sacredly important a matter as real religion, you have much misconstrued your friend. "I am not mad most noble Festus!" Have you ever met a perfect character? Do we not sometimes rather exchange faults than get rid of them? For instance; I am perhaps tired with and shocked at a life, too much the prey of giddy inconsistencies and thoughtless follies; by degrees I grow sober, prudent, and statedly pious, I say *statedly*, because the most unaffected devotion is not at all inconsistent with my first character.—I join the world in congratulating myself on the happy change. But let me pry more narrowly into this affair; have I, at bottom, any thing of a secret pride in these endowments and emendations? have I nothing of a presbyterian sourness, a hypercritical severity, when I survey my less regular neighbours? In a word, have I missed all those nameless and numberless modifications of indistinct selfishness, which are so near our own eyes, that we can scarce bring them within our sphere of vision, and which the known spotless cambric of our character hides from the ordinary observer?

My definition of worth is short: truth and humanity respecting our fellow-creatures; reverence

ence and humility in the presence of that Being my Creator and Preserver, and who, I have every reason to believe, will one day be my Judge. The first part of my definition is the creature of unbiassed instinct; the last is the child of after reflection. Where I found these two essentials, I would gently note, and slightly mention any attendant flaws—flaws, the marks, the consequences of human nature.

How wretched is the condition of one who is haunted with conscious guilt, and trembling under the idea of dreaded vengeance! and what a placid calm, what a charming secret enjoyment it gives, to bosom the kind feelings of friendship and the fond throes of love! Out upon the tempest of anger, the acrimonious gall of fretful impatience, the sullen frost of lowering resentment, or the corroding poison of withered envy! They eat up the immortal part of man! If they spent their fury only on the unfortunate objects of them, it would be something in their favor; but these miserable passions, like traitor Iscariot, betray their lord and master.

Thou, Almighty Author of peace, and goodness, and love! do thou give me the social heart that kindly tastes of every man's cup! Is it a draught of

of joy?—warm and open my heart to share it with cordial, unenvying rejoicing! Is it the bitter potion of sorrow?—melt my heart with sincerely sympathetic woe! Above all, do thou give me the manly mind, that resolutely exemplifies, in life and manners, those sentiments which I would wish to be thought to possess! The friend of my soul—there may I never deviate from the firmest fidelity, and most active kindness! there may the most sacred, inviolate honor, the most faithful, kindling constancy, ever watch and animate my every thought and imagination!

Did you ever meet with the following lines spoken of religion:

"'Tis *this*, my friend, that streaks our morning bright;
"'Tis *this*, that gilds the horror of our night!
"When wealth forsakes us, and when friends are few;
"When friends are faithless, or when foes pursue;
"'Tis *this* that wards the blow, or stills the smart,
"Disarms affliction, or repels its dart:
"Within the breast bids purest raptures rise,
"Bids smiling conscience spread her cloudless skies."

I met

I met with these verses very early in life, and was so delighted with them, that I have them by me, copied at school.

I have heard and read a good deal of philosophy, benevolence and greatness of soul; and when rounded with the flourish of declamatory periods, or poured in the melifluence of Parnassian measure, they have a tolerable effect on a musical ear; but when all these high-sounding professions are compared with the very act and deed, as it is usually performed, I do not think there is any thing in or belonging to human nature so baldly disproportionate. In fact, were it not for a very few of our kind, among whom an honored friend of mine, whom to you, Sir, I will not name, is a distinguished instance, the very existence of magnanimity, generosity, and all their kindred virtues, would be as much a question with metaphysicians as the existence of witchcraft.

There is no time when the conscious, thrilling chords of love and friendship give such delight, as in the pensive hours of what Thomson calls "Philosophic

"Philosophic Melancholy." The family of misfortune, a numerous group of brothers and sisters! they need a resting place to their souls. Unnoticed, often condemned by the world; in some degree, perhaps condemned by themselves, they feel the full enjoyment of ardent love, delicate tender endearments, mutual esteem, and mutual reliance.

In this light I have often admired religion. In proportion as we are wrung with grief, or distracted with anxiety, the ideas of a compassionate Deity, an Almighty Protector, are doubly dear.

I have been, this morning, taking a peep through, as Young finely says, "the dark post-"ern of time long elapsed;" 'twas a rueful prospect! What a tissue of thoughtlessness, weakness, and folly! My life reminded me of a ruined temple. What strength, what proportion in some parts! what unsightly gaps, what prostrate ruins in others! I kneeled down before the Father of Mercies, and said, "Father I have sinned "against Heaven, and in thy sight, and am no "more worthy to be called thy son." I rose, eased, and strengthened.

LETTERS

FROM WILLIAM BURNS,

AND

AN ACCOUNT OF HIS DEATH.

LETTERS

FROM WILLIAM BURNS TO THE POET.

THE Editor conceived that it might not be uninteresting to the admirers of Burns to peruse the following Letters, selected from a greater number that have fallen into his hands. They are the genuine and artless productions of his younger Brother, WILLIAM BURNS, *a young man, who after having served an apprenticeship to the trade of a Saddler, took his road towards the South, and having resided a short time at Newcastle-upon-Tyne, arrived in London, where he died of a putrid fever in the year* 1790.

If the Reader supposes he shall meet in these Letters with that vivacity of genius which the near relationship of the Writer to the Poet might lead him to expect, he will be disappointed. They contain indeed little more than the common transactions incident to the humble line of life of their author, expressed in simple and unaffected language. But to those whose admiration and affection for the Poet extend to his relations and concerns, they are not without their value. They demonstrate the kind and fraternal attachment of Burns, in a strong and amiable point of view; they form an additional eulogy on the memory of the excellent Father, who had given all his sons an education superior to their situation in life, and assidu-

ously

ously inculcated upon them the best principles of virtue and morality; and they exhibit the picture of a contented and an uncontaminated youth, who, as he would never have attempted the dangerous heights to which the Poet aspired, would never have experienced those pangs of disappointment and remorse which incessantly agitated his bosom; but would

" Thro' the calm sequestered vale of life,
Have kept the noiseless tenor of his way."

No. I.

To Mr. ROBERT BURNS, Ellisland.

Longtown, Feb. 15, 1789.

DEAR SIR,

As I am now in a manner only entering into the world, I begin this our correspondence, with a view of being a gainer by your advice, more than ever you can be by any thing I can write you of what I see, or what I hear, in the course of my wanderings. I know not how it happened, but you were more shy of your counsel than I could have wished the time I staid with

with you: whether it was because you thought it would disgust me to have my faults freely told me while I was dependant on you; or whether it was because you saw that by my indolent disposition, your instructions would have no effect, I cannot determine; but if it proceeded from any of the above causes, the reason of withholding your admonition is now done away, for I now stand on my own bottom, and that indolence, which I am very conscious of, is something rubbed off, by being called to act in life whether I will or not; and my inexperience, which I daily feel, makes me wish for that advice which you are so able to give, and which I can only expect from you or Gilbert since the loss of the kindest and ablest of fathers.

The morning after I went from the Isle, I left Dumfries about five o'clock and came to Annan to breakfast, and staid about an hour; and I reached this place about two o'clock. I have got work here, and I intend to stay a month or six weeks, and then go forward, as I wish to be at York about the latter end of summer, where I propose to spend next winter, and go on for London in the spring.

I have the promise of seven shillings a week from Mr. Proctor while I stay here, and six-

pence

pence more if he succeeds himself, for he has only new begun trade here. I am to pay four shillings per week of board wages, so that my neat income here will be much the same as in Dumfries.

The inclosed you will send to Gilbert with the first opportunity. Please send me the first Wednesday after you receive this, by the Carlisle waggon, two of my coarse shirts, one of my best linen ones, my velveteen vest, and a neck-cloth; write to me along with them, and direct to me, Saddler, in Longtown, and they will not miscarry, for I am boarded in the waggoner's house. You may either let them be given in to the waggon, or send them to Coulthard and Gellebourn's shop and they will forward them. Pray write me often while I stay here.—I wish you would send me a letter, though never so small, every week, for they will be no expense to me and but little trouble to you. Please to give my best wishes to my sister-in-law, and believe me to be your affectionate

And obliged Brother,

WILLIAM BURNS.

P. S. The great coat you gave me at parting did me singular service the day I came here, and merits my hearty thanks. From what has been said

said the conclusion is this; that my hearty thanks and my best wishes are all that you and my sister must expect from

W. B.

No. II.

Newcastle, 24th Jan. 1790.

DEAR BROTHER,

I WROTE you about six weeks ago, and I have expected to hear from you every post since, but I suppose your excise business which you hinted at in your last, has prevented you from writing. By the bye, when and how have you got into the excise; and what division have you got about Dumfries? These questions please answer in your next, if more important matter do not occur. But in the mean time let me have the letter to John Murdoch, which Gilbert wrote me you meant to send; inclose it in your's to me and let me have them as soon as possible,

possible, for I intend to sail for London, in a fortnight, or three weeks at farthest.

You promised me when I was intending to go to Edinburgh, to write me some instructions about behaviour in companies rather above my station, to which I might be eventually introduced. As I may be introduced into such companies at Murdoch's or on his account when I go to London, I wish you would write me some such instructions now: I never had more need of them, for having spent little of my time in company of any sort since I came to Newcastle, I have almost forgot the common civilities of life. To these instructions pray add some of a moral kind, for though (either through the strength of early impressions, or the frigidity of my constitution) I have hitherto withstood the temptation to those vices, to which young fellows of my station and time of life are so much addicted, yet, I do not know if my virtue will be able to withstand the more powerful temptations of the metropolis: yet, through God's assistance and your instructions I hope to weather the storm.

Give the compliments of the season and my love to my sisters, and all the rest of your family. Tell Gilbert the first time you write him

him that I am well, and that I will write him either when I sail or when I arrive at London.

I am, &c.

W. B.

No. III.

London, 21st March, 1790.

DEAR BROTHER,

I HAVE been here three weeks come Tuesday, and would have written you sooner but was not settled in a place of work:—We were ten days on our passage from Shields; the weather being calm I was not sick, except one day when it blew pretty hard. I got into work the Friday after I came to town, I wrought there only eight days, their job being done. I got work again in a shop in the Strand, the next day after I left my former master. It is only a temporary place, but I expect to be settled soon in a shop to my mind, although it

it will be a harder task than I at first imagined, for there are such swarms of fresh hands just come from the country that the town is quite overstocked, and except one is a particularly good workman, (which you know I am not, nor I am afraid ever will be) it is hard to get a place: However, I don't yet despair to bring up my lee-way, and shall endeavour if possible to sail within three or four points of the wind. The encouragement here is not what I expected, wages being very low in proportion to the expense of living, but yet, if I can only lay by the money that is spent by others in my situation in dissipation and riot, I expect soon to return you the money I borrowed of you and live comfortably besides.

In the mean time I wish you would send up all my best linen shirts to London, which you may easily do by sending them to some of your Edinburgh friends, to be shipped from Leith. Some of them are too little, don't send any but what are good, and I wish one of my sisters could find as much time as to trim my shirts at the breast, for there is no such thing to be seen here as a plain shirt, even for wearing, which is what I want these for. I mean to get one or two new shirts here for Sundays, but I assure you that linen here is a very expensive article.

article. I am going to write to Gilbert to send me an Ayrshire cheese; if he can spare it he will send it to you, and you may send it with the shirts, but I expect to hear from you before that time. The cheese I could get here; but I will have a pride in eating Ayrshire cheese in London, and the expense of sending it will be little, as you are sending the shirts any how.

I write this by J. Stevenson, in his lodgings, while he is writing to Gilbert. He is well and hearty, which is a blessing to me as well as to him: We were at Covent Garden chapel this forenoon, to hear the *Calf* preach, he is grown very fat, and is as boisterous as ever.* There is a whole colony of Kilmarnock people here, so we don't want for acquaintance.

Remember me to my sisters and all the family. I shall give you all the observations I have made on London in my next, when I shall have seen more of it.

I am, Dear Brother, yours, &c.

W. B.

No.

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* Vide *Poetical Address to The Calf. Dr. Currie's edition, vol.* iii. p. 68.

No. IV.

From Mr. MURDOCH to the BARD,

GIVING HIM AN ACCOUNT OF THE DEATH OF HIS BROTHER WILLIAM.

Hart-Street, Bloomsbury-Square, London, September 14th, 1790.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

Yours of the 16th of July, I received on the 26th, in the afternoon, per favor of my friend Mr. Kennedy, and at the same time was informed that your brother was ill. Being engaged in business till late that evening, I set out next morning to see him, and had thought of three or four medical gentlemen of my acquaintance, to one or other of whom I might apply for advice, provided it should be necessary. But when I went to Mr. Barber's to my great astonishment and heart-felt grief, I found that my young friend had, on Saturday, bid an everlasting farewel to all sublunary things.—It was about a fortnight before that he had found me out, by Mr. Stevenson's accidentally calling at my shop to buy something. We had only one interview, and that was highly

highly entertaining to me in several respects. He mentioned some instruction I had given him when very young, to which he said he owed, in a great measure, the philanthropy he possessed. —He also took notice of my exhorting you all, when I wrote, about eight years ago, to the man who, of all mankind that I ever knew, stood highest in my esteem, "not to let go "your integrity."—You may easily conceive that such conversation was both pleasing and encouraging to me: I anticipated a deal of rational happiness from future conversations. ——Vain are our expectations and hopes. They are so almost always——Perhaps, (nay, certainly,) for our good. Were it not for disappointed hopes we could hardly spend a thought on another state of existence, or be in any degree reconciled to the quitting of this.

I know of no one source of consolation to those who have lost young relatives equal to that of their being of a good disposition, and of a promising character.

* * * * * *

Be assured, my dear friend, that I cordially sympathize with you all, and particularly with Mrs. W. Burns, who is undoubtedly one of the most tender and affectionate mothers

that ever lived. Remember me to her in the most friendly manner, when you see her, or write.——Please present my best compliments to Mrs. R. Burns, and to your brother and sisters.——There is no occasion for me to exhort you to filial duty, and to use your united endeavours in rendering the evening of life as comfortable as possible to a mother, who has dedicated so great a part of it in promoting your temporal and spiritual welfare.

Your letter to Dr. Moore, I delivered at his house, and shall most likely know your opinion of Zeluco, the first time I meet with him. I wish and hope for a long letter. Be particular about your mother's health. I hope she is too much a Christian to be afflicted above measure, or to sorrow as those who have no hope.

One of the most pleasing hopes I have is to visit you all; but I am commonly disappointed in what I most ardently wish for.

I am,

Dear Sir,

Yours sincerely,

JOHN MURDOCH.

POETRY.

EPISTLES IN VERSE.

TO J. LAPRAIK.

Sept. 13th, 1785.

Guid speed an' furder to you Johny,
Guid health, hale han's, an' weather bony;
Now when ye're nickan down fu' cany
The staff o' bread,
May ye ne'er want a stoup o' brany
To clear your head.

May Boreas never thresh your rigs,
Nor kick your rickles aff their legs,
Sendin' the stuff o'er muirs an' haggs
Like drivin' wrack;
But may the tapmast grain that wags
Come to the sack.

I'm bizzie too, an' skelpin' at it,
But bitter, daudin showers hae wat it,
Sae my auld stumpie pen I gat it
Wi' muckle wark,
An' took my jocteleg* an' whatt it,
Like ony clark.

It's now twa month that I'm your debtor,
For your braw, nameless, dateless letter,
Abusin' me for harsh ill nature
On holy men,
While deil a hair yoursel ye're better,
But mair profane.

But let the kirk-folk ring their bells,
Let's sing about our noble sels;
We'll cry nae jads frae heathen hills
To help, or roose us,
But browster wives† an' whiskie stills,
They are the muses.

Your friendship sir, I winna quat it,
An' if ye mak' objections at it,
Then han' in nieve some day we'll knot it,
An' witness take,
An' when wi' Usquabae we've wat it
It winna break.

But

* *Jocteleg*—a knife.

† *Browster wives*—Alehouse wives.

But if the beast and branks be spar'd
Till kye be gaun without the herd,
An' a' the vittel in the yard,
An' theckit right,
I mean your ingle-side to guard
Ae winter night.

Then muse-inspirin' aqua-vitæ
Shall make us baith sae blythe an' witty,
Till ye forget ye're auld an' gatty,
An' be as canty
As ye were nine year less than thretty,
Sweet ane an' twenty!

But stooks are cowpet* wi' the blast,
An' now the sinn keeks in the west,
Then I maun rin amang the rest
An' quat my chanter;
Sae I subscribe mysel in haste,
Your's, Rab the Ranter.†

TO

---

* *Cowpet*—Tumbled over.

† *Rab the Ranter*—It is very probable that the poet thus named himself after the *Border Piper*, so spiritedly introduced in the popular song of *Maggie Lauder*:—

"For I'm a piper to my trade,
My name is *Rab the Ranter*;
The lasses loup as they were daft,
When I blaw up my chanter."

TO THE REV. JOHN M'MATH,

INCLOSING A COPY OF HOLY WILLIE'S PRAYER, WHICH HE HAD REQUESTED.

Sept. 17th, 1785.

While at the stook the shearers cow'r
To shun the bitter blaudin' show'r,
Or in gulravage* rinnin scow'r
To pass the time,
To you I dedicate the hour
In idle rhyme.

My musie, tir'd wi' mony a sonnet
On gown, an' ban', an' douse black bonnet,
Is grown right eerie now she's done it,
Lest they shou'd blame her,
An' rouse their holy thunder on it
And anathem her.

I own

---

* *Gulravage*—Running in a confused, disorderly manner, like boys when leaving school.

I own 'twas rash, an' rather hardy,
That I, a simple, countra bardie,
Shou'd meddle wi' a pack sae sturdy,
Wha, if they ken me,
Can easy, wi' a single wordie,
Louse h-ll upon me.

But I gae mad at their grimaces,
Their sighan, cantan, grace-prood faces;
Their three-mile prayers, an hauf-mile graces,
Their raxan conscience,
Whaws greed, revenge, an' pride disgraces
Waur nor their nonsense.

There's *Gaun*,* miska't waur than a beast,
Wha has mair honor in his breast
Than mony scores as guid's the priest
Wha sae abus't him.
An' may a bard no crack his jest
What way they've use't him.

See him,† the poor man's friend in need,
The gentleman in word an' deed,
An' shall his fame an' honor bleed
By worthless skellums,
An' not a muse erect her head
To cowe the blellums?
O Pope,

* Gavin Hamilton, Esq.

† The poet has introduced the two first lines of this stanza into the dedication of his works to Mr. Hamilton.

O Pope, had I thy satire's darts
To gie the rascals their deserts,
I'd rip their rotten, hollow hearts,
An' tell aloud
Their jugglin' hocus pocus arts
To cheat the crowd.

God knows, I'm no the thing I shou'd be,
Nor am I even the thing I cou'd be,
But twenty times, I rather wou'd be
An atheist clean,
Than under gospel colors hid be
Just for a screen.

An honest man may like a glass,
An honest man may like a lass,
But mean revenge, an' malice fause
He'll still disdain,
An' then cry zeal for gospel laws,
Like some we ken.

They take religion in their mouth;
They talk o' mercy, grace an' truth,
For what? to gie their malice skouth
On some puir wight,
An' hunt him down, o'er right an' ruth,
To ruin streight.

All

All hail, religion! maid divine!
Pardon a muse sae mean as mine,
Who in her rough imperfect line
Thus daurs to name thee;
To stigmatize false friends of thine
Can ne'er defame thee.

Tho' blotch't an' foul wi' mony a stain,
An' far unworthy of thy train,
With trembling voice I tune my strain
To join with those,
Who boldly dare thy cause maintain
In spite of foes:

In spite o' crowds, in spite o' mobs,
In spite of undermining jobs,
In spite o' dark banditti stabs
At worth an' merit,
By scoundrels, even wi' holy robes,
But hellish spirit.

O Ayr, my dear, my native ground,
Within thy presbytereal bound
A candid lib'ral band is found
Of public teachers,
As men, as christians too renown'd
An' manly preachers.

Sir, in that circle you are nam'd;
Sir, in that circle you are ſam'd;
An' some, by whom your doctrine's blam'd
(Which gies you honor)
Even Sir, by them your heart's esteem'd,
An' winning manner.

Pardon this freedom I have ta'en,
An' if impertinent I've been,
Impute it not, good Sir, in ane
Whase heart ne'er wrang'd ye,
But to his utmost would befriend
Ought that belang'd ye.

To GAVIN HAMILTON, Esq. Mauchline.

(RECOMMENDING A BOY.)

Mossgaville, May 3, 1786.

I HOLD it, Sir, my bounden duty
To warn you how that Master Tootie,
Alias, Laird M'Gaun,*
Was here to hire yon lad away
'Bout whom ye spak the tither day,
An' wad hae don't aff han':
But lest he learn the callan tricks,
As faith I muckle doubt him,
Like scrapin' out auld Crummie's nicks,
An' tellin' lies about them;
As lieve then I'd have then,
Your clerkship he should sair,
If sae be, ye may be
Not fitted otherwhere.

Altho'

---

* *Master Tootie* then lived in Mauchline; a dealer in Cows. It was his common practice to cut the nicks or markings from the horns of cattle, to disguise their age.—He was an artful trick-contriving character; hence he is called a *Snick-drawer*. In the Poet's "*Address to the Deil*," he styles that august personage an *auld, snick-drawing* dog! E.

Altho' I say't, he's gleg enough,
An' bout a house that's rude an' rough,
The boy might learn to *swear;*
But then wi' *you*, he'll be sae taught,
An' get sic fair *example* straught,
I hae na ony fear.
Ye'll catechise him every quirk,
An' shore him weel wi' *hell;*
An' gar him follow to the *kirk*——
—Ay when ye gang *yoursel.*
If ye then, maun be then
Frae hame this comin Friday,
Then please sir, to lea'e sir,
The orders wi' your lady.

My word of honor I hae gien,
In Paisley John's, that night at e'en,
To meet the *Wauld's worm;*
To try to get the twa to gree,
An' name the airles* an' the fee,
In legal mode an' form:
I ken he weel a *Snick* can draw,
When simple bodies let him;
An' if a *Devil* be at a',
In faith he's sure to get him.
To phrase you an' praise you,
Ye ken your Laureat scorns:
The pray'r still, you share still,
Of grateful Minstrel Burns.

To

* *The Airles*—Earnest money.

To Mr. M'ADAM, of Craigen-gillan,

IN ANSWER TO AN OBLIGING LETTER HE SENT IN THE COMMENCEMENT OF MY POETIC CAREER.

Sir, o'er a gill I gat your card,
I trow it made me proud;
See wha taks notice o' the bard!
I lap and cry'd fu' loud.

Now deil-ma-care about their jaw,
The senseless, gawky million;
I'll cock my nose aboon them a',
I'm roos'd by Craigen-Gillan!

'Twas noble, Sir; 'twas like yoursel,
To grant your high protection:
A great man's smile ye ken fu' well,
Is ay a blest infection.

Tho', by his * banes wha in a tub
Match'd Macedonian Sandy!
On my ain legs thro' dirt and dub,
I independent stand ay.—

And when those legs to gude, warm kail,
Wi welcome canna bear me;
A lee dyke-side, a sybow-tail,
And barley-scone shall cheer me.

Tho'

* Diogenes.

Heaven spare you lang to kiss the breath
O' mony flow'ry simmers !
And bless your bonie lasses baith,
I'm tald they're loosome kimmers !

And God bless young Dunaskin's laird,
The blossom of our gentry !
And may he wear an auld man's beard,
A credit to his country.

To CAPTAIN RIDDEL, GLENRIDDEL.

(EXTEMPORE LINES ON RETURNING A NEWSPAPER.)

Ellisland, Monday Evening.

Your news and review, Sir, I've read through and through, Sir,
With little admiring or blaming:
The papers are barren of home-news or foreign,
No murders or rapes worth the naming.

Our friends the reviewers, those chippers and hewers,
Are judges of mortar and stone, Sir;
But of *meet*, or *unmeet*, in a *fabrick complete*,
I'll boldly pronounce they are none, Sir.

My goose-quill too rude is to tell all your goodness
Bestowed on your servant, the Poet;
Would to God I had one like a beam of the sun,
And then all the world, Sir, should know it!

To

To TERRAUGHTY,* on his Birth-Day.

Health to the Maxwells' vet'ran Chief!
Health, ay unsour'd by care or grief:
Inspir'd, I turn'd Fate's sybil leaf,
This natal morn,
I see thy life is stuff o' prief,
Scarce quite half worn.—

This day thou metes threescore eleven,
And I can tell that bounteous Heaven
(The second sight, ye ken, is given
To ilka Poet)
On thee a tack o' seven times seven
Will yet bestow it.

If envious buckies view wi' sorrow
Thy lengthen'd days on this blest morrow,
May desolation's lang-teeth'd harrow,
Nine miles an hour,
Rake them, like Sodom and Gomorrah,
In brunstane stoure—

But

* Mr. Maxwell, of Terraughty, near Dumfries.

But for thy friends, and they are mony,
Baith honest men and lasses bonie,
May couthie fortune, kind and cannie,
In social glee,
Wi' mornings blythe and e'enings sunny
Bless them and thee!

Fareweel, auld birkie! Lord be near ye,
And then the Deil he daur na steer ye:
Your friends ay love, your faes ay fear ye,
For me, shame fa' me,
If neist my heart I dinna wear ye
While BURNS they ca' me.

To A LADY,

WITH A PRESENT OF A PAIR OF DRINKING GLASSES.

FAIR Empress of the Poet's soul,
And Queen of Poetesses;
Clarinda, take this little boon,
This humble pair of glasses.—

And fill them high with generous juice,
As generous as your mind;
And pledge me in the generous toast—
"*The whole of human kind!*"

"*To those who love us!*"—second fill;
But not to those whom we love;
Lest we love those who love not us!——
A third—"*to thee and me, love!*"

MISCELLANEOUS

POEMS.

Tragic Fragment.

In my early years nothing less would serve me than courting the tragic Muse.—I was, I think, about eighteen or nineteen when I sketched the outlines of a tragedy forsooth; but the bursting of a cloud of family misfortunes, which had for some time threatened us, prevented my farther progress. In those days I never wrote down any thing; so, except a speech or two, the whole has escaped my memory.—The following, which I most distinctly remember, was an exclamation from a great character:—great in occasional instances of generosity, and daring at times in villainies. He is supposed to meet with a child of misery, and exclaims to himself—

"All devil as I am, a damned wretch,
"A harden'd, stubborn, unrepenting villain,

" Still my heart melts at human wretchedness;
" And with sincere tho' unavailing sighs,
" I view the helpless children of distress.
" With tears indignant I behold th' oppressor
" Rejoicing in the honest man's destruction,
" Whose unsubmitting heart was all his crime.
" Even you, ye helpless crew, I pity you;
" Ye, whom the seeming good think sin to pity
" Ye poor, despis'd, abandon'd, vagabonds,
" Whom vice, as usual, has turn'd o'er to ruin.
" O, but for kind, tho' ill-requited friends,
" I had been driven forth like you forlorn,
" The most detested, worthless wretch among you!"

THE VOWELS—A TALE.

'Twas where the birch and sounding thong are ply'd,
The noisy domicile of pedant pride;
Where ignorance her darkening vapour throws,
And cruelty directs the thickening blows;
Upon a time, Sir Abece the great,
In all his pedagogic powers elate,
His awful chair of state resolves to mount,
And call the trembling vowels to account.—

First

First enter'd A, a grave, broad, solemn wight,
But ah! deform'd, dishonest to the sight!
His twisted head look'd backward on his way,
And flagrant from the scourge he grunted, *ai!*
Reluctant, E stalk'd in; with piteous race
The jostling tears ran down his honest face!
That name, that well-worn name, and all his own,
Pale he surrenders at the tyrant's throne!
The pedant stifles keen the Roman sound
Not all his mongrel diphthongs can compound;
And next the title following close behind,
He to the nameless, ghastly wretch assign'd.

The cobweb'd gothic dome resounded, Y!
In sullen vengeance, I, disdain'd reply:
The pedant swung his felon cudgel round,
And knock'd the groaning vowel to the ground!
In rueful apprehension enter'd O,
The wailing minstrel of despairing woe;
Th' Inquisitor of Spain the most expert,
Might there have learnt new mysteries of his art:
So grim, deform'd, with horrors entering U,
His dearest friend and brother scarcely knew!
As trembling U stood staring all ag'
The pedant in his left hand clutch'd him.
In helpless infants' tears he dipp'd his right,
Baptiz'd him *eu*, and kick'd him from his sight.

The following sketch seems to be one of a Series intended for a projected work, under the title of "The Poet's Progress." *This character was sent as a specimen, accompanied by a letter to* Professor Dugald Stewart, *in which it is thus noticed.* "*The fragment beginning,* "A little, upright, pert, tart, &c." *I have not shewn* "*to any man living, 'till I now send it to you. It* "*forms the postulata, the axioms, the definition of a* "*character, which, if it appear at all, shall be placed* "*in a variety of lights. This particular part I send you* "*merely as a sample of my hand at portrait sketching.*"

Sketch.

A little, upright, pert, tart, tripping wight,
And still his precious self his dear delight:
Who loves his own smart shadow in the streets,
Better than e'er the fairest she he meets.
A man of fashion too, he made his tour,
Learn'd *vive la bagatelle, et vive l'amour;*
So travell'd monkies their grimace improve,
Polish their grin, nay sigh for ladies' love.
Much specious lore but little understood;
Fineering oft outshines the solid wood:
His solid sense—by inches you must tell,
But mete his cunning by the old Scots ell;
His meddling vanity, a busy fiend,
Still making work his selfish craft must mend.

Scots

SCOTS PROLOGUE,

For Mr. Sutherland's Benefit Night, Dumfries.

What needs this din about the town o' Lon'on,
How this new play an' that new sang is comin'?
Why is outlandish stuff sae meikle courted?
Does nonsense mend like whisky, when imported?
Is there nae poet, burning keen for fame,
Will try to gie us sangs and plays at hame?
For comedy abroad he need na toil,
A fool and knave are plants of every soil;
Nor need he hunt as far as Rome and Greece
To gather matter for a serious piece;
There's themes enough in Caledonian story,
Would shew the tragic muse in a' her glory.—

Is there no daring bard will rise, and tell
How glorious Wallace stood, how hapless, fell?
Where are the muses fled that could produce
A drama worthy o' the name o' Bruce;
How here, even here, he first unsheath'd the sword
'Gainst mighty England and her guilty lord;
And after mony a bloody, deathless doing,
Wrench'd his dear country from the jaws of ruin?
O for a Shakespeare or an Otway scene,
To draw the lovely, hapless Scottish Queen!

Vain

Vain all th' omnipotence of female charms
'Gainst headlong, ruthless, mad Rebellion's arms.
She fell, but fell with spirit truly Roman,
To glut the vengeance of a rival woman:
A woman, tho' the phrase may seem uncivil,
As able and as cruel as the Devil!
One Douglas lives in Home's immortal page,
But Douglases were heroes every age:
And tho' your fathers, prodigal of life,
A Douglas followed to the [illegible] strife,
Perhaps if bowls row right, and Right succeeds,
Ye yet may follow where a Douglas leads!

As ye hae generous done, if a' the land
Would take the muses' servants by the hand;
Not only hear, but patronize, befriend them,
And where ye justly can commend, commend them;
And aiblins when they winna stand the test,
Wink hard and say, the folks hae done their best!
Would a' the land do this, then I'll be caution
Ye'll soon hae poets o' the Scottish nation,
Will gar fame blaw until her trumpet crack,
And warsle time an' lay him on his back!

For us and for our stage should ony spier,
"Whose aught thae chiels maks a' this bustle here?"

My

My best leg foremost, I'll set up my brow,
We have the honor to belong to you!
We're your ain bairns, e'en guide us as ye like,
But like good mithers, shore before ye strike.—
And gratefu' still I hope ye'll ever find us,
For a' the patronage and meikle kindness
We've got frae a' professions, setts and ranks:
God help us! we're but poor—ye'se get but thanks.

An extemporaneous Effusion on being appointed to the Excise.

Searching auld wives barrels
Och, ho! the day!
That clarty barm should stain my laurels;
But—what'l ye say!
These muvin' things ca'd wives and weans
Wad muve the very hearts o' stanes!

To the Owl—*By John M'Creddie.**

Sad bird of night, what sorrow calls thee forth,
To vent thy plaints thus in the midnight hour?
Is it some blast that gathers in the north,
Threat'ning to nip the verdure of thy bow'r?
Is

---

* Burns sometimes wrote poems in the old ballad style, which for reasons best known to himself, he gave to the world as songs of the *olden time*. That famous soldier's song in particular, first printed in a letter to Mrs. Dunlop, (*Dr. Currie's ed. vol.* ii. No. *ꝑX.*) beginning

Go fetch to me a pint o' wine,
An' fill it in a silver tassie;
That I may drink before I go,
A service to my bonie lassie;

has been pronounced by some of our best living poets an *inimitable relique* of some *ancient Minstrel!* Yet I have discovered it to be the actual production of *Burns* himself. The ballad of *Auld lang syne* was also introduced in this ambiguous manner, though there exist proofs that the two best stanzas of it are indisputably his; hence there are strong grounds for believing this poem also to be his production, notwithstanding the evidence to the contrary. It was found *among his MSS. in his own hand writing, with occasional interlineations, such as occur in all his primitive effusions.* It is worthy of his muse; but it is more in the style of *Gray* or *Collins.*

Should

Is it, sad owl, that autumn strips the shade,
And leaves thee here, unshelter'd and forlorn?
Or fear that winter will thy nest invade?
Or friendless melancholy bids thee mourn?

Shut out, lone bird, from all the feather'd train,
To tell thy sorrows to th' unheeding gloom;
No friend to pity when thou dost complain,
Grief all thy thought, and solitude thy home.

Sing on sad mourner! I will bless thy strain,
And pleas'd in sorrow listen to thy song:
Sing on sad mourner! to the night complain,
While the lone echo wafts thy notes along.

Is beauty less, when down the glowing cheek
Sad, piteous tears in native sorrows fall?
Less kind the heart when anguish bids it break?
Less happy he who lists to pity's call?

Ah no, sad owl! nor is thy voice less sweet,
That sadness tunes it, and that grief is there;
That spring's gay notes, unskill'd, thou canst repeat;
That sorrow bids thee to the gloom repair:

Nor

Should there however, be a real author of the name of *John M'Creddie*, he will not be displeased at the publication of his poem, when he recollects that it had obtained the notice of *Burns*, and had undergone his correction. E.

Nor that the treble songsters of the day,
Are quite estranged, sad bird of night! from thee;
Nor that the thrush deserts the evening spray,
When darkness calls thee from thy reverie.—

From some old tow'r, thy melancholy dome,
While the gray walls and desart solitudes
Return each note, responsive to the gloom
Of ivied coverts and surrounding woods;

There hooting; I will list more pleas'd to thee,
Than ever lover to the nightingale;
Or drooping wretch, oppress'd with misery,
Lending his ear to some condoling tale.

On seeing the beautiful Seat of Lord G.

What dost thou in that mansion fair?
Flit G—— and find
Some narrow, dirty, dungeon cave,
The picture of thy mind!

On the Same.

No Stewart art thou G——
The Stewarts all were brave;
Besides the Stewarts were but *fools*,
Not one of them a *knave*.

On the Same.

Bright ran thy line O, G——
Thro' many a far-fam'd sire!
So ran the far-fam'd Roman way,
So ended in a *mire*.

To the Same on the Author being threatened with his resentment.

Spare me thy vengeance, G——
In quiet let me live:
I ask no kindness at thy hand,
For thou hast none to give.

THE

THE DEAN OF FACULTY.

A NEW BALLAD.

Tune—*The Dragon of Wantley.*

Dire was the hate at old Harlaw,
That Scot to Scot did carry;
And dire the discord Langside saw,
For beauteous, hapless Mary:
But Scot with Scot ne'er met so hot,
Or were more in fury seen, Sir,
Than 'twixt *Hal* and *Bob* for the famous job—
Who should be *Faculty*'s *Dean*, Sir.—

This Hal for genius, wit, and lore,
Among the first was number'd;
But pious *Bob*, 'mid learning's store,
Commandment tenth remember'd.—
Yet simple *Bob* the victory got,
And wan his heart's desire;
Which shews that heaven can boil the pot,
Though the devil p—s in the fire.—

Squire

Squire *Hal* besides had in this case
Pretensions rather brassy,
For talents to deserve a place
Are qualifications saucy;
So their worships of the Faculty,
Quite sick of merit's rudeness,
Chose one who should owe it all, d'ye see,
To their gratis grace and goodness.—

As once on Pisgah purg'd was the sight
Of a son of Circumcision,
So may be, on this Pisgah height,
Bob's purblind, mental vision:
Nay, *Bobby*'s mouth may be open'd yet
Till for eloquence you hail him,
And swear he has the Angel met
That met the Ass of Balaam.—

Extempore in the Court of Session.

Tune,—*Gillicrankie.*

Lord A——te.

He clench'd his pamphlets in his fist,
He quoted and he hinted,
Till in a declamation-mist,
His argument he tint* it:
He gaped for't, he graped for 't,
He fand it was awa, man;
But what his common sense came short,
He eked out wi' law, man.

Mr. Er—ne.

Collected Harry stood awee,
Then open'd out his arm, man;
His lordship sat wi' ruefu' e'e,
And ey'd the gathering storm, man:
Like wind-driv'n hail it did assail,
Or torrents owre a lin, man;
The *Bench* sae wise lift up their eyes,
Half-wauken'd wi' the din, man.

VERSES

* *Tint*—lost.

VERSES, TO J. RANKEN,

(The person to whom his Poem on shooting the partridge is addressed, while Ranken occupied the farm of Adamhill, in Ayrshire.)

Ae day, as Death, that grusome carl,
Was driving to the tither warl'
A mixtie-maxtie motley squad,
And mony a guilt bespotted lad;
Black gowns of each denomination,
And thieves of every rank and station,
From him that wears the star and garter,
To him that wintles* in a halter:
Asham'd himsel to see the wretches;
He mutters, glow'rin at the bitches,
"By G-d I'll not be seen behint them,
"Nor 'mang the sp'ritual core present them,
"Without, at least ae honest man,
"To grace this d——d infernal clan."

By

---

* The word *Wintle*, denotes sudden and involuntary motion. In the ludicrous sense in which it is here applied, it may be admirably translated by the vulgar London expression of *Dancing upon nothing*.

By Adamhill a glance he threw,
" L—d God !" quoth he, " I have it now,
" There's just the man I want, i' faith,"
And quickly stoppit *Ranken's* breath. *

ON HEARING THAT THERE WAS FALSEHOOD IN THE REV. DR. B——'S VERY LOOKS.

That there is falsehood in his looks
I must and will deny :
They say their master is a knave—
And sure they do not lie.

ON A SCHOOLMASTER IN CLEISH PARISH, FIFESHIRE.

Here lie Willie M—hie's banes,
O Satan, when ye tak him,
Gie him the schulin of your weans ;
For clever DEILS he'll mak 'em !

ADDRESS

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* The first thought of this poem seems to have been suggested by *Falstaff's* account of his ragged recruits passing through Coventry ;—

" I'll not march through Coventry with them, that's flat !"

ADDRESS TO GENERAL DUMOURIER.

(A PARODY ON ROBIN ADAIR.)

You're welcome to Despots, Dumourier;
You're welcome to Despots, Dumourier.—
How does Dampiere do?
Aye, and Bournonville too?
Why did they not come along with you,
Dumourier?

I will fight France with you, Dumourier,—
I will fight France with you, Dumourier:—
I will fight France with you,
I will take my chance with you;
By my soul I'll dance a dance with you, Dumourier.

Then let us fight about, Dumourier;
Then let us fight about, Dumourier;
Then let us fight about,
'Till freedom's spark is out,
Then we'll be d-mned no doubt—Dumourier.*

ELEGY

---

* It is almost needless to observe that the song of *Robin Adair*, begins thus:—

You're welcome to Paxton, Robin Adair;
You're welcome to Paxton, Robin Adair.—
How does Johnny Mackerell do?
Aye, and Luke Gardener too?
Why did they not come along with you, Robin Adair?

ELEGY

ON THE YEAR 1788,

A SKETCH.

For Lords or kings I dinna mourn,
E'en let them die—for that they're born
But oh! prodigious to reflec'!
A *Towmont*,* Sirs, is gaun to wreck!
O *Eighty-eight*, in thy sma' space
What dire events ha'e taken place!
Of what enjoyments thou hast reft us!
In what a pickle thou hast left us!

The Spanish empire's tint a head,
An' my auld teethless Bawtie's dead;
The tulzie's sair 'tween Pitt an' Fox,
And 'tween our Maggie's twa wee cocks;
The tane is game, a bruidie devil,
But to the hen-birds unco civil;
The tither's something dour o' treadin,
But better stuff ne'er claw'd a midden—

Ye

---

* *A Towmont*—A Twelvemonth.

Ye ministers, come mount the poupit,
An' cry till ye be haerse an' roupet,
For *Eighty-eight* he wish'd you weel,
An' gied you a' baith gear an' meal;
E'en mony a plack, and mony a peck,
Ye ken yourscls, for little fock!—

Ye bonie lasses, dight your e'en,
For some o' you ha'e tint a frien';
In *Eighty-eight*, ye ken, was ta'en
What ye'll ne'er ha'e to gie again.

Observe the very nowt an' sheep,
How dowf and daviely they creep;
Nay, even the yirth itsel does cry,
For E'nbrugh wells are grutten dry.

O *Eighty-nine*, thou's but a bairn,
An' no o'er auld, I hope, to learn!
Thou beardless boy, I pray tak care,
Thou now has got thy Daddy's chair,
Nae hand-cuff'd, mizl'd, hap-shackl'd *Regent*,
But, like himsel, a full free agent.
Be sure ye follow out the plan
Nae waur than he did, honest man!
As muckle better as you can.

January 1, 1789.

VERSES,

VERSES,

Written under the portrait of Fergusson, the poet, in a copy of that author's works presented to a young Lady in Edinburgh, March 19th, 1787.

Curse on ungrateful man, that can be pleas'd,
And yet can starve the author of the pleasure.
O thou my elder brother in misfortune,
By far my elder brother in the muses,
With tears I pity thy unhappy fate!
Why is the bard unpitied by the world,
Yet has so keen a relish of its pleasures?*

---

* This apostrophe to Fergusson, bears a striking affinity to one in Burns's poems, *Dr. Currie's edition*, vol. III. p. 248.

O Fergusson! thy glorious parts
Ill suited law's dry musty arts!
My curse upon your whunstane hearts,
Ye Embrugh gentry!
The tythe o' what ye waste at Cartes
Wad stow'd his pantry!

This was written before Burns visited the Scottish capital. Even without a poet's susceptibility we may feel how this prophetic parallel of Fergusson's case with his own must have pressed on the memory of our bard, when he paid this second tribute of affection to his *elder brother* in misfortune. E.

SONGS AND BALLADS.

SONGS, &c.

EVAN BANKS.

Slow spreads the gloom my soul desires,
The sun from India's shore retires;
To Evan Banks, with temp'rate ray,
Home of my youth, he leads the day.
Oh banks to me for ever dear!
Oh streams whose murmurs still I hear!
All, all my hopes of bliss reside
Where Evan mingles with the Clyde.

And she, in simple beauty drest,
Whose image lives within my breast;
Who trembling heard my parting sigh,
And long pursued me with her eye;
Does she, with heart unchang'd as mine,
Oft in the vocal bowers recline?
Or where yon grot o'erhangs the tide,
Muse while the Evan seeks the Clyde?

Ye lofty banks that Evan bound!
Ye lavish woods that wave around,

And o'er the stream your shadows throw,
Which sweetly winds so far below;
What secret charm to mem'ry brings,
All that on Evan's border springs;
Sweet banks! ye bloom by Mary's side:
Blest stream! she views thee haste to Clyde.—

Can all the wealth of India's coast
Atone for years in absence lost?
Return, ye moments of delight,
With richer treasures bless my sight!
Swift from this desart let me part,
And fly to meet a kindred heart!
Nor more may ought my st//ps divide
From that dear stream which flows [redacted]Clyde.

SONG.

Ae fond kiss, and then we sever;
Ae fareweel, alas, for ever!
Deep in heart-wrung tears I'll pledge thee,
Warring sighs and groans I'll wage thee.
Who shall say that fortune grieves him
While the star of hope she leaves him?
Me, nae chearfu' twinkle lights me;
Dark despair around benights me.

I'll ne'er blame my partial fancy,
Naething could resist my Nancy:
But to see her, was to love her;
Love but her, and love for ever.
Had we never lov'd sae kindly,
Had we never lov'd sae blindly,
Never met—or never parted,
We had ne'er been broken-hearted.

Fare thee weel, thou first and fairest!
Fare thee weel, thou best and dearest!
Thine be ilka joy and treasure,
Peace, enjoyment, love, and pleasure!
Ae fond kiss, and then we sever;
Ae fareweel, alas, for ever!
Deep in heart-wrung tears I'll pledge thee,
Warring sighs and groans I'll wage thee.

SONG.

PATRIOTIC—*unfinished.*

Here's a health to them that's awa,
Here's a health to them that's awa;
And wha winna wish gude luck to our cause,
May never gude luck be their fa'*!

It's

---

* *Fa'*—lot.

It's gude to be merry and wise,
It's gude to be honest and true,
It's gude to support Caledonia's cause,
And bide by the buff and the blue.

Here's a health to them that's awa,
Here's a health to them that's awa;
Here's a health to Charlie, the chief o' the clan,
Altho' that his band be sma'.
May liberty meet wi' success!
May prudence protect her frae evil!
May tyrants and tyranny tine in the mist,
And wander their way to the devil!

Here's a health to them that's awa,
Here's a health to them that's awa,
Here's a health to Tammie, the Norland laddie,
That lives at the lug o' the law!
Here's freedom to him, that wad read,
Here's freedom to him, that wad write!
There's nane ever fear'd that the truth should be heard,
But they wham the truth wad indite.

Here's a health to them that's awa,
Here's a health to them that's awa,
Here's Chieftain M'Leod, a Chieftain worth gowd,
Tho' bred amang mountains o' snaw!

* * * *

SONG

SONG.

Now bank an' brae are claith'd in green
An' scatter'd cowslips sweetly spring,
By Girvan's fairy haunted stream
The birdies flit on wanton wing.
To Cassillis' banks when e'ening fa's,
There wi' my Mary let me flee,
There catch her ilka glance of love
The bonie blink o' Mary's e'e!

The child wha boasts o' warld's walth,
Is aften laird o' meikle care;
But Mary sh[illegible] a' my ain,
Ah, forti[illegible] canna gie me mair!
Then let m[illegible]ange by Cassillis' banks,
Wi' her [illegible] lassie dear to me,
And catch [illegible]er ilka glance o' love,
The bo[illegible] blink o' Mary's e'e!

THE BONIE LAD THAT'S FAR AWA.

O how can I be blythe and glad,
Or how can I gang brisk and braw,
When the bonie lad that I lo'e best
Is o'er the hills and far awa?

Its no the frosty winter wind,
Its no the driving drift and snaw;
But ay the tear comes in my e'e,
To think on him that's far awa.

My father pat me frae his door,
My friends they hae disown'd me a'.
But I hae ane will tak my part,
The bonie lad that's far awa.

A pair o' gloves he gave to me,
And silken snoods * he gave me twa;
And I will wear them for his sake,
The bonie lad that's far awa.

 The

* Ribbands for binding the hair.

The weary winter soon will pass,
And spring will cleed the birken-shaw;
And my sweet babie will be born,
And he'll come hame that's far awa. *

---

* I have heard the country girls, in the Merse and Teviotdale, sing a song, the first stanza of which greatly resembles the opening of this.

O how can I be blythe or glad
Or in my mind contented be,
When he's far aff that I love best,
And banish'd frae my company. E.

SONG.*

OUT over the Forth I look to the north,
But what is the north and its Highlands to me?
The south nor the east gie ease to my breast,
The far foreign land, or the wild rolling sea.

But I look to the west, when I gae to rest,
That happy my dreams and my slumbers may be;
For far in the west lives he I lo'e best,
The lad that is dear to my babie and me.

LINES ON A PLOUGHMAN.

As I was a wand'ring ae morning in spring,
I heard a young Ploughman sae sweetly to sing,
And as he was singin' thir words he did say,
There's nae life like the Ploughman in the month o' sweet May.—

The

---

* Of this exquisite ballad the last verse only is printed in Dr. Currie's Edition—He did not know that the opening stanza existed. E.

The lav'rock in the morning she'll rise frae her
nest,
And mount to the air wi' the dew on her breast,*
And wi' the merry Ploughman she'll whistle and
sing,
And at night she'll return to her nest back again.

I'LL

---

* It is pleasing to mark those touches of sympathy which shew the sons of genius to be of one kindred.—In the following passage from the poem of his countryman, the same figure is illustrated with characteristic simplicity; and never were the tender and the sublime of poetry more happily united, nor a more affectionate tribute paid to the memory of Burns.

——" Thou, simple bird,
" Of all the vocal quire, dwell'st in a home
" The humblest; yet thy morning song ascends
" Nearest to Heaven;—sweet emblem of his song,†
" Who sung thee wakening by the daisy's side!"
Grahame's Birds of Scotland, vol. ii. p. iv.

† Burns.

I'LL AY CA' IN BY YON TOWN.

I'LL ay ca' in by yon town,
And by yon garden green, again;
I'll ay ca' in by yon town,
And see my bonie Jean again.

There's nane sall ken, there's nane sall guess,
What brings me back the gate again,
But she my fairest faithfu' lass,
And stownlins * we sall meet again.

She'll wauder by the aiken tree,
When trystin-time† draws near again;
And when her lovely form I see,
O haith, she's doubly doar again!

WHISTLE.

---

* *Stownlins*—By stealth.

† *Trystin-time*—The time of appointment.

WHISTLE O'ER THE LAVE O'T.

First when Maggy was my care,
Heaven, I thought, was in her air;
Now we're married—spier nae mair—
Whistle o'er the lave o't.—
Meg was meek, and Meg was mild,
Bonie Meg was nature's child—
—Wiser men than me's begnil'd;
Whistle o'er the lave o't.

How we live, my Meg and me,
How we love and how we 'gree,
I care na by how few may see;
Whistle o'er the lave o't.—
Wha I wish were maggot's meat,
Dish'd up in her winding sheet,
I could write—but Meg maun see't—
Whistle o'er the lave o't —

YOUNG JOCKEY.

YOUNG Jockey was the blythest lad
In a' our town or here awa;
Fu' blythe he whistled at the gaud,*
Fu' lightly danc'd he in the ha'!
He roos'd my e'en sae bonie blue,
He roos'd my waist sae genty sma;
An' ay my heart came to my mou,
When ne'er a body heard or saw.

My Jockey toils upon the plain,
Thro' wind and weet, thro' frost and snaw;
And o'er the lee I leuk fu' fain
When Jockey's owsen hameward ca'.
An' ay the night comes round again,
When in his arms he taks me a';
An' ay he vows he'll be my ain
As lang's he has a breath to draw.

M'PHERSON'S

---

* *The Gaud*—at the Plough.

M'PHERSON'S FAREWEL.

FAREWEL ye dungeons dark and strong,
The wretch's destinie!
M'Pherson's time will not be long,
On yonder gallows tree.

Sae rantingly, sae wantonly,
Sae dauntingly gaed he;
He play'd a spring and danc'd it round,
Below the gallows tree.

Oh, what is death but parting breath?—
On mony a bloody plain
I've dar'd his face, and in this place
I scorn him yet again!
Sae rantingly, &c.

Untie these bands from off my hands,*
And bring to me my sword;
And there's no a man in all Scotland,
But I'll brave him at a word.
Sae rantingly, &c.

I've

* See the 2d verse of the ballad of *Hughie Graham*, p. 287.

I've liv'd a life of sturt and strife;
I die by treacherie:
It burns my heart I must depart
And not avenged be.
Sae rantingly, &c.

Now farewel light, thou sunshine bright,
And all beneath the sky!
May coward shame distain his name,
The wretch that dares not die!
Sae rantingly, &c.

SONG.

HERE's, a bottle and an honest friend!
What wad ye wish for mair, man?
Wha kens, before his life may end,
What his share may be of care, man.
Then catch the moments as they fly,
And use them as ye ought, man:—
Believe me, happiness is shy,
And comes not ay when sought, man.

SONG.

SONG.

TUNE—*Braes o' Balquhidder.*

I'll kiss thee yet, yet,
An' I'll kiss thee o'er again,
An' I'll kiss thee yet, yet,
My bonie Peggy Alison!

Ilk care and fear, when thou art near,
I ever mair defy them, O;
Young kings upon their hansel throne
Are no sae blest as I am, O!
I'll kiss thee, &c.

When in my arms, wi' a' thy charms,
I clasp my countless treasure, O;
I seek nae mair o' Heaven to share,
Than sic a moment's pleasure, O!
I'll kiss thee, &c.

And by thy e'en, sae bonie blue,
I swear I'm thine for ever, O!—
And on thy lips I seal my vow,
And break it shall I never, O!
I'll kiss thee, &c.

SONG.*

Tune—*If he be a Butcher neat and trim.*

On Cessnock banks there lives a lass,
Could I describe her shape and mien;
The graces of her weelfar'd face,
And the glancin' of her sparklin' e'en.

She's fresher than the morning dawn
When rising Phœbus first is seen,
When dewdrops twinkle o'er the lawn;
An' she's twa glancin' sparklin' e'en.

She's stately like yon youthful ash,
That grows the cowslip braes between,
And shoots its head above each bush;
An' she's twa glancin' sparklin' e'en.

Her

* This song was an early production. It was recovered by the Editor from the oral communication of a lady residing at Glasgow, whom the Bard in early life affectionately admired.

She's spotless as the flow'ring thorn
With flow'rs so white and leaves so green,
When purest in the dewy morn;
An' she's twa glancin' sparklin' e'en.

Her looks are like the sportive lamb,
When flow'ry May adorns the scene,
That wantons round its bleating dam;
An' she's twa glancin' sparklin' e'en.

Her hair is like the curling mist
That shades the mountain side at e'en,
When flow'r-reviving rains are past;
An' she's twa glancin' sparklin' e'en.

Her forehead's like the show'ry bow,
When shining sunbeams intervene
And gild the distant mountain's brow;
An' she's twa glancin' sparklin' e'en.

Her voice is like the ev'ning thrush
That sings in Cessnock banks unseen,
While his mate sits nestling in the bush;
An' she's twa glancin' sparklin' e'en.

Her lips are like the cherries ripe,
That sunny walls from boreas screen,
They tempt the taste and charm the sight;
An' she's twa glancin' sparklin' e'en.

Her

Her teeth are like a flock of sheep,
With fleeces newly washen clean,
That slowly mount the rising steep;
An' she's twa glancin' sparklin' e'en.

Her breath is like the fragrant breeze
That gently stirs the blossom'd bean,
When Phoebus sinks behind the seas;
An' she's twa glancin' sparklin' e'en.

But it's not her air, her form, her face,
Tho' matching beauty's fabled queen,
But the mind that shines in ev'ry grace
An chiefly in her sparklin' e'en.

WAE IS MY HEART.

Wae is my heart, and the tear's in my e'e;
Lang, lang joy's been a stranger to me:
Forsaken and friendless my burden I bear,
And the sweet voice o' pity ne'er sounds in my ear.

Love

Love thou hast pleasures; and deep hae I loved;
Love thou hast sorrows; and sair hae I proved:
But this bruised heart that now bleeds in my
breast,
I can feel by its throbbings will soon be at rest.

O if I were, where happy I hae been;
Down by yon stream and yon bonie castle green:
For there he is wand'ring and musing on me,
'Wha wad soon dry the tear frae his Phillis's e'e.

FRAGMENT.

Her flowing locks, the raven's wing,
Adown her neck and bosom hing;
How sweet unto that breast to cling,
And round that neck entwine her!

Her lips are roses wat wi' dew,
O, what a feast, her bonie mou!
Her cheeks a mair celestial hue,
A crimson still diviner.

BALLAD.

To thee, lov'd Nith, thy gladsome plains,
Where late wi' careless thought I rang'd,
Though prest wi' care and sunk in woe,
To thee I bring a heart unchang'd.—

I love thee Nith, thy banks and braes,
Tho' mem'ry there my bosom tear;
For there he rov'd that brake my heart
Yet to that heart, ah, still how dear!

FRAGMENT.

The winter it is past, and the simmer comes at last,
And the small birds sing on every tree;
Now every thing is glad while I am very sad,
Since my true love is parted from me.

The rose upon the brier by the waters running clear,
May have charms for the linnet or the bee;
Their little loves are blest, and their little hearts at rest,
But my true love is parted from me.

SONG.

SONG.

Tune—*Banks of Banna.*

Yestreen I had a pint o' wine,
A place where body saw na';
Yestreen lay on this breast o' mine
The gowden locks of Anna.
The hungry Jew in wilderness
Rejoicing o'er his manna,
Was naething to my hinny bliss
Upon the lips of Anna.

Ye monarchs tak the east and west,
Frae Indus to Savannah!
Gie me within my straining grasp
The melting form of Anna.
There I'll despise imperial charms,
An Empress or Sultana,
While dying raptures in her arms
I give and take with Anna!

Awa thou flaunting god o' day!
Awa thou pale Diana!
Ilk star gae hide thy twinkling ray
When I'm to meet my Anna.
Come, in thy raven plumage, night,
Sun, moon, and stars withdrawn a';
And bring an angel pen to write
My transports wi' my Anna!

SONG.*

The Deil cam fiddling thro' the town,
And danc'd awa wi' the Exciseman;
And ilka wife cry'd, "Auld Mahoun,
"We wish you luck o' the prize man.

"*We'll mak our maut, and brew our drink,*
"*We'll dance and sing and rejoice man;*
"*And mony thanks to the muckle black Deil,*
"*That danc'd awa wi' the Exciseman.*

"There's threesome reels, and foursome reels,
"There's hornpipes and strathspeys, man;
"But the ae best dance e'er cam to our lan',
"Was—the Deil's awa wi' the Exciseman.

"*We'll mak our maut, &c.*"

SONG.

---

* At a meeting of his brother Excisemen in Dumfries, Burns being called upon for a Song, handed these verses extempore to the President, written on the back of a letter.

SONG.

Powers celestial, whose protection
  Ever guards the virtuous fair,
While in distant climes I wander,
  Let my Mary be your care:
Let her form sae fair and faultless,
  Fair and faultless as your own;
Let my Mary's kindred spirit,
  Draw your choicest influence down.

Make the gales you waft around her,
  Soft and peaceful as her breast;
Breathing in the breeze that fans her,
  Sooth her bosom into rest:
Guardian angels, O protect her,
  When in distant lands I roam;
To realms unknown while fate exiles me,
  Make her bosom still my home.*

HUNTING

* Probably written on Highland Mary, on the eve of the poet's departure to the West Indies.

HUNTING SONG.

I red you beware at the hunting.

The heather was blooming, the meadows were mawn,
Our lads gaed a hunting, ae day at the dawn,
O'er moors and o'er mosses and mony a glen,
At length they discovered a bonie moor-hen.

I red you beware at the hunting, young men;
I red you beware at the hunting, young men;
Tak some on the wing, and some as they spring,
But cannily steal on a bonie moor-hen.

Sweet brushing the dew from the brown heather bells,
Her colors betray'd her on yon mossy fells;
Her plumage outlustred the pride o' the spring,
And O! as she wantoned gay on the wing.

I red, &c.

Auld

Auld Phœbus himsel, as he peep'd o'er the hill;
In spite at her plumage he tryed his skill;
He levell'd his rays where she bask'd on the brae—
His rays were outshone, and but mark'd where she lay.

I red, &c.

They hunted the valley, they hunted the hill;
The best of our lads wi' the best o' their skill;
But still as the fairest she sat in their sight,
Then, whirr! she was over, a mile at a flight.—

I red, &c.

* * * *

YOUNG PEGGY.

Young Peggy blooms our boniest lass,
Her blush is like the morning,
The rosy dawn, the springing grass,
With early gems adorning:
Her eyes outshine the radiant beams
That gild the passing shower,
And glitter o'er the crystal streams,
And cheer each fresh'ning flower.

Her lips more than the cherries bright,
A richer die has grac'd them,
They charm th' admiring gazer's sight
And sweetly tempt to taste them:
Her smile is as the ev'ning mild,
When feather'd pairs are courting,
And little lambkins wanton wild,
In playful bands disporting.

Were Fortune lovely Peggy's foe,
Such sweetness would relent her,
As blooming spring unbends the brow
Of surly, savage winter.
Detraction's eye no aim can gain
Her winning pow'rs to lessen:
And fretful envy grins in vain,
The poison'd tooth to fasten.

Ye pow'rs of Honor, Love, and Truth,
From ev'ry ill defend her;
Inspire the highly favor'd youth
The destinies intend her;
Still fan the sweet connubial flame
Responsive in each bosom;
And bless the dear parental name
With many a filial blossom.*

SONG.

* This was one of the poet's earliest compositions. It is copied from a MS. book, which he had before his first publication.

SONG.

Tune—*The King of France, he rade a Race.*

Amang the trees where humming bees
At buds and flowers were hinging, O
Auld Caledon drew out her drone,
And to her pipe was singing; O
'Twas Pibroch,* sang, strathspey, or reels,
She dirl'd them aff, fu' clearly, O
When there cam a yell o' foreign squeels,
That dang her tapsalteerie, O—

Their capon craws and queer ha ha's,
They made our lugs grow eerie, O
The hungry bike did scrape and pike
'Till we were wae and weary; O—
But a royal ghaist wha ance was cas'd
A prisoner aughteen year awa,
He fir'd a fiddler in the North
That dang them tapsalteerie, O.

* * *

---

* *Pibroch*—A Highland war song, adapted to the bag-pipe.

FINIS.



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